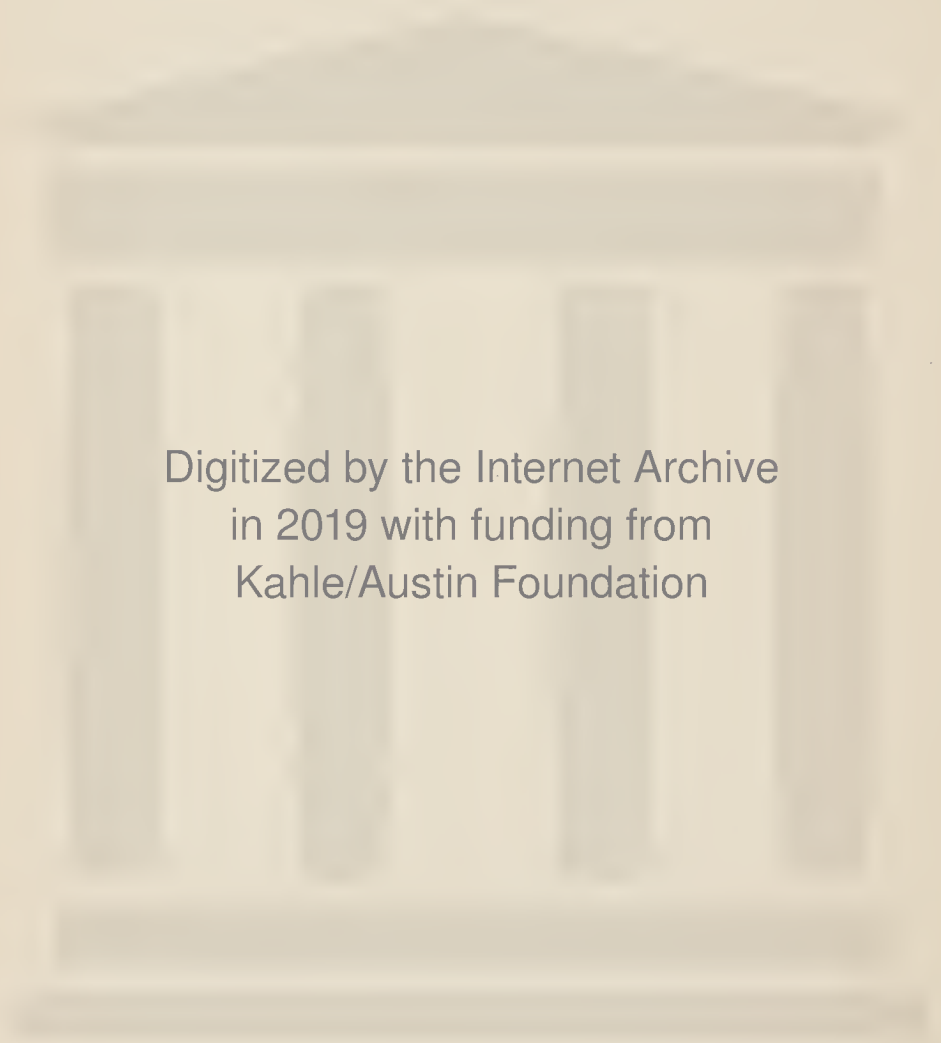

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# THE LIFE OF GRANVILLE GEORGE LEVESON GOWER SECOND EARL GRANVILLE K.G.

VOL. II.



LORD GRANVILLE.
Portrait from Life by G. H. THOMAS.

# THE LIFE OF GRANVILLE GEORGE LEVESON GOWER

# SECOND EARL GRANVILLE

K.G.

1815-1891

BY

LORD EDMOND FITZMAURICE

*WITH PORTRAITS*

IN TWO VOLUMES—VOL. II.

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*From a pencil drawing from life by G. H. Thomas made for his picture of the marriage of the Prince of Wales (King Edward VII.).*

'WAITING FOR THE VERDICT' (ALABAMA CLAIM) (1872) *To face page* 98

*From a pen and ink sketch by Mr. E. Fairfield of the Colonial Office.*

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PHOTOGRAVURE PLATE.

PORTRAIT OF LORD GRANVILLE (1876) . . . . ,, 177

*From a painting by George Richmond, R.A.*

# LIFE

OF

# THE SECOND EARL GRANVILLE

## CHAPTER I

### THE IRISH CHURCH AND THE HOUSE OF LORDS

### 1868–1870

A MARKED process of political change was at work in 1868. The Liberal party in the House of Commons, as it existed at the time of the introduction of household suffrage into the boroughs, could still reckon on the support of the landed magnates and the leaders of commercial and industrial enterprises who had dominated its counsels ever since the first Reform Bill. In the constituencies it still drew its main strength from the middle class, to which the Reform Bill of 1832 had given power. The political opinions of that class represented individual liberty in politics and Protestantism in religion—ideas which also penetrated far down into the new electorate. The adverse result, however, of the Lancashire elections made the Liberal party realise that when an appeal for justice to Roman Catholic Ireland was placed in the political foreground, divisions of opinions hitherto hardly suspected might have to be faced in classes which it had hitherto been supposed would give a unanimous vote. But as long as Mr. Gladstone was able to associate this appeal with an attack on a favoured Church or on a privileged class, it was likely to prosper, notwithstanding local defeats. In

the House of Lords the position was unaltered in its broad outlines from that described in a previous chapter, yet although the system of proxies had just been abolished, it had in other respects grown sensibly worse for the Liberal leader. The transition in 1865 from the Premiership of Lord Palmerston to that of Lord Russell marked a distinct period in the history of party. The transition from Lord Russell to Mr. Gladstone accentuated the change. The chiefs of the Liberal party had hitherto belonged to one or other of two types: either the pure Whig with Liberal or even Radical leanings, or the Canningite convert whose Liberalism was more distinctively felt in foreign than in home affairs. Lord Russell was the type of the first: Lord Palmerston of the second. With neither of these types could Mr. Gladstone be classed; nor could he be identified with the Manchester school, notwithstanding his adoption of their economic and commercial tenets, which he had inherited from Sir Robert Peel, rather than borrowed from Mr. Cobden and Mr. Bright. Mr. Gladstone was mentally the child of the Oxford Movement, and in this respect his accession to the ranks of Liberalism made no difference in him. Here evidently was a political incarnation in harmony neither with the jaunty Erastianism of Lord Palmerston, nor with the *doctrinaire* Liberalism and almost Unitarian Christianity of Lord Russell, who, like the Duke of Grafton in the previous century, had developed a mistletoe growth of theology on the political staff with which he sought to guide the people on the way in which they should go. Mr. Gladstone's numerous writings and speeches might in vain be searched for any sympathetic allusion to the Puritan movement of the seventeenth century. To the last he considered Laud a saint and a martyr: at the name of Cromwell he shuddered and passed by on the other side. If the statesmen who had hitherto led the Liberal party were essentially English in character and Protestant in opinion, Mr. Gladstone was, it was noted, Scotch by origin, Welsh by residence, and Catholic in sympathy. He regarded undogmatic Christianity as an abomination; and intellectually, while a determined enemy of Ultramontanism, he sympathised far more

with the Roman Catholics than with the English Nonconformists, whom in 1868 he called in to help him to redress the grievances of Ireland. While, therefore, on the one hand his democratic sympathies and his popular views on foreign affairs aroused the ever growing enthusiasm of the masses, the fear of the unknown and of the unexpected in regard to home questions was constantly exciting the apprehension of large sections of the mainstays of Liberalism. These apprehensions were further encouraged by the almost unlimited resources of the new Prime Minister in the use of language which at one moment suggested that the claims of authority and tradition were dearer to him than to them; yet at another seemed to be inviting them to enter on voyages on unknown seas hitherto avoided by the political mariner. Even those who approved the particular measures which Mr. Gladstone from time to time proposed, were ever growing suspicious that the ultimate aims of the new Prime Minister were not their aims, nor his mind their mind; and that the Liberal party was being gradually led by him onwards to some as yet only partially disclosed goal. From this time forward Lord Granville found his followers in the House of Lords suffering from a slow but steady reduction in numbers, through the gradual desertion of those who were more and more alienated by vague yet ever growing fears as to the intentions of the Prime Minister. If the task of recommending the measures of Lord Russell to the House of Lords had not been easy, that of recommending the measures of Mr. Gladstone was still less so, and the process of political attrition went on, constantly gnawing and diminishing the coastline of Liberalism.

History records many instances where fortresses have been held and successfully defended by a mere handful of men against superior numbers—few, if any, where a small defending force has successfully assumed the offensive and raised a siege. Yet to be the attacking party was at this period the constant and daily duty of the minority in the House of Lords, who at a time of Liberal predominance in the country found themselves surrounded on the benches of

the Upper House by a huge array of hostile lay peers, aided by prelates who recalled the observation of Lord Grey that the pulse of ambition could beat as strong under a lawn sleeve as under the cuff of a cloth coat. To this assembly, hostile to the recognition of the smallest approach to religious equality in school and college alike, Lord Granville had to recommend an Education Bill and the abolition of University tests. He had to persuade the same audience to accept the disestablishment and disendowment of the Established Church of Ireland. He had to ask a House—the great majority of which still believed that, in the words of Lord Palmerston, tenant right spelt landlord wrong—to submit to the provisions of the Irish Land Act of 1870. Against the opposition of a formidable array of social prejudice, which considered the military forces of the Crown to be the natural preserve of the upper classes, he and his colleagues had to carry through a great scheme of Army Reform ; and, perhaps the most difficult task of all, before a tribunal which could show at the moment an array of legal talent greater even than that usually to be found there, he had to justify the abolition of purchase by Royal Warrant when Parliament had been asked and had refused to abolish it by statute. Soon afterwards he had to recommend for acceptance a Bill for the introduction of secret voting, another to give a legal status to trade unions, and another for the complete alteration of the Supreme Judicature of the Empire. Collisions between the two Houses were constantly to be feared, even when they did not actually take place; and if one grave crisis at least occurred, others were but with difficulty averted. The interest in consequence of the long parliamentary struggles of these years in the House of Lords does not consist in the study of the details of the amendments around which the frequent contests raged backwards and forwards between the two Houses, so much as in the position of the small Liberal minority, and of their leader, who at one and the same time had to preserve himself and them from the slightest suspicion of not being true to the chief of the great and impatient majority which ruled in the

House of Commons, and to avoid flouting the feelings of that other majority immediately opposite whose unwilling assent and consent had somehow to be obtained. To bear defeats unmoved; to remain unruffled when it was suggested that he stooped to be the instrument of trampling on the assembly of which he was the leader in order to please a powerful minister elsewhere; to bear the anxiety of victories won more by skilful manœuvring and negotiation than by any appeal to big battalions, was his almost daily task. He had also to be the principal channel of communication between the Prime Minister and the Queen, who, always true to her constitutional position, and never allowing herself to stray a step beyond it, nevertheless was year by year less able to conceal how little she was now in harmony with the party to which she had once given her fullest support, and how gradually if unwillingly she was withdrawing the complete confidence which had made Lord Granville her trusted counsellor on more than one important occasion in the earlier portion of her reign. 'The Queen,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'complains that my tone is too decided in writing to her;' and he noted the waning influence at Court of even Lord Clarendon.[1] The great knowledge and acquired experience in affairs of the Queen was more and more from this time onward to make itself felt as a serious power. The Constitution is always subject to the law of incessant change; and even apart from the personal factor, there were circumstances then beginning to operate, though as yet only dimly recognised, which tended to increase the weight of the Crown. The quick political instinct of the late Prime Minister had not been slow to observe them. He was only true to the dictates of his own historical conscience if he sought to give effect to the theories contained in his own early writings on the relations of the Sovereign with Parliament: theories which allotted to the former a wider sphere of action than had been usual since the days of George I.; and were hardly to be distinguished from the views advanced by Baron Stockmar in the days of the Whig supremacy during the earlier part

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 18, 1869.

of the reign. The Whigs, according to Mr. Disraeli, were a Venetian oligarchy. In 'the Aberdeen school,' Baron Stockmar thought he recognised the hereditary antagonists of the Crown, and in substance the only political connection in England capable some day of developing a Republican party.[1]

The first of the great measures of the Liberal Government of 1868 was the Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church which had been the main issue at the General Election. In order to facilitate a settlement, Mr. Gladstone had tried to open negotiations with the heads of both the Irish and English Churches. Lord Granville recommended the Queen to hear the views of Dr. Magee, an Irishman by birth, once Dean of Cork, whom Mr. Disraeli had in 1868 promoted to the see of Peterborough. The eloquence of the Bishop, as striking in Parliament as in the pulpit, was certain to make him a factor to be reckoned with in the House of Lords, and his views could be trusted to be those not of a mere ecclesiastic, but of a statesman. An interview accordingly took place between the Queen and the Bishop.

Dr. Magee saw that large concessions were necessary. After the result of the general election, disestablishment he recognised could not be escaped; but, desirous of making the most favourable terms he could for the Irish Church, and recognising the old division of opinion on the Liberal side between the advocates of complete disendowment and of concurrent endowment, he proposed, while accepting disestablishment and a large measure of disendowment, to retain a portion of the revenues of the Church for division between the Anglican Church, the Presbyterian body, and the Roman Catholics. He seems to have suggested that the endowments having an origin posterior to the Reformation should be given to the Church, but those of an earlier origin to the Roman Catholics, and that the Presbyterians should be

[1] Martin, *Life of the Prince Consort*, i. 313-316; ii. 546, 547; Harrop, *Bolingbroke*, 260–266; Sidney Low, *Governance of England*, ch. xiv. Disraeli, *Coningsby*, bk. vii. ch. ii.

compensated for the loss of the Regium Donum by the payment of a capital sum to them out of Church funds.

General Grey to Lord Granville.

Osborne, *February* 13, 1869.

'My dear Granville,—Ever since her conversation with the Bishop, the Queen has been much *préoccupée* with the subject of the Irish Church, and feels more and more the importance of not allowing it—and if possible to prevent it—to be made the subject of fierce and acrimonious contention, both in and out of Parliament.

'Yet, if the Bishop is correct in his belief that the details of the measure as sketched in the heads given to her Majesty by Mr. Gladstone will meet with the uncompromising opposition of the Irish Church, such, her Majesty fears, will be the inevitable result of introducing the measure, as proposed, on March 1.

'She is therefore more than ever anxious that more time should be given before it is introduced, and that that time should be used for further consultation, particularly with the Archbishop of Canterbury. Indeed, her Majesty thinks that the Archbishop's position and character make it only right that such a measure should not be introduced without an opportunity being afforded to him of forming an opinion upon it, and communicating that opinion to the Government.

'The Bishop of Peterborough said that the Archbishop had *not* been yet communicated with on the subject, so that when he asked her Majesty's permission to mention to him (the Archbishop) in confidence what had passed here in the Cabinet, her Majesty was in some doubt what to say. On the whole, however, her Majesty thought it was right to give him that permission.

'The Queen would willingly leave no stone unturned to procure the peaceable and satisfactory settlement of this question; and cannot think this ought to be impossible, if the Government does not make it so by prematurely committing itself to details which will provoke an acrimonious and uncompromising Opposition.

'Disestablishment being accepted, and disendowment almost to the full extent proposed by Government, surely the further details might be the subject of compromise.

'Yours very truly, C. Grey.'

Lord Granville to the Queen.

*February* 13, 1869.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty. In consequence of the return of your Majesty's messenger, Lord

Granville has only a few minutes to answer your Majesty's letter and its important inclosure.

'Notwithstanding the trouble and anxiety which have been kindly undertaken by your Majesty, and although Lord Granville has unwittingly called a most formidable witness into the box, yet he cannot regret having suggested to your Majesty to see one who has so thorough a knowledge of the subject, though he sees it from his own point of view.

'The Bishop of Peterborough seems to concur with her Majesty's Government as to the impossibility of imposing by law that connection of the Irish Church with the Crown and with the English Church which your Majesty desires to maintain.

'Some of the points to which he objects, the disposal of empty churches and the maintenance of cathedrals, Lord Granville supposes might be easily modified. The suspensory clauses might be improved, but it hardly could seriously be proposed to create new life interests for the sole purpose of being immediately compensated. The great misfortune, however, seems to be that even if all the amendments he proposed in the Government Scheme were adopted, the Bishop says they would not be acceptable to the English or Irish Church. He proposes a counter-proposal of levelling up of a nature which Lord Granville believes no one of the Cabinet could conscientiously support, not on account of its having been rejected by a defunct House of Commons, but because after the pledges given on the hustings it would be impossible to get a majority of the Commons to vote for it. The Scotch members and the Nonconformists would all vote against it, besides its having been denounced by some of the best English and Irish Liberals.

'In the Cabinet discussions, Mr. Gladstone was thought by some of the more Conservative as well as by the more advanced members to be too tender of the interests of the Irish Church. He only carried some of the points in its favour by the knowledge and ability with which he treated them.

'Lord Granville knows that immediately after the formation of the Government, Mr. Gladstone tried to open negotiations with the Irish Church. Lord Granville is sure he will continue to endeavour to do so with the English Bishops, and will certainly communicate with the Archbishop of Canterbury in reference to her Majesty's suggestion.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO GENERAL GREY.

MENTMORE, LEIGHTON BUZZARD, *February* 14, 1869.

MY DEAR GREY.—Your box has followed me here. It is impossible for me to send you an answer which you could get before

you have an opportunity of seeing Gladstone, to whom I have confidentially sent your letter. I feel sure he will not object to the Queen having authorised the Bishop of Peterborough to communicate with the Archbishop, but he will be able to show to the Queen the difficulty of delay; that it has not been his fault that earlier negotiations have not taken place, and that there is time yet for communication before March 1—if the Archbishop has anything settled in his own mind. But although he would probably think it his duty to endeavour to obtain as good terms as possible for the Irish Church, yet the thing he really cares about is to do that which the Bishop of Peterborough told you the Irish Church would never accept, namely to impose restrictions, although you disendow and disestablish them.

'Mr. Gladstone will probably show the Queen that we are between two fires; that while the Bishops think our Bill too severe upon the Episcopal Church, the Scotch, the Nonconformists, and the Catholics will complain that it does not effect anything like that religious equality which has been promised, and that the Episcopal Church with its cathedrals, churches, glebes and glebe houses, and practically large endowments, is placed in a position of great superiority over the Presbyterians, who are to be merely compensated for the "Regium Donum," and the Church of the great majority, who are only to be compensated for the seminary of their priests.[1]

'A deputation from the Presbyterians told me on Wednesday that, supposing the Episcopal Clergy got their glebe houses, they, the Presbyterians, had a right to demand a sum equivalent to the capital they had spent in manses.

'The Queen may rely upon Gladstone being the member of the Cabinet who is most anxious to get episcopal and ecclesiastical acquiescence.

'If you have an opportunity, please make my excuses to the Queen for my hurried scrawl of yesterday. One minute more would have made it late for the train.[2] 'Yours, G.'

Of these negotiations no more need be said at this stage, as but little direct result from them can be traced in the framework of the Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Ireland, though, as will be seen, they were subsequently renewed and had important consequences; nor in these pages is it necessary to take up the time of the reader with the history of the measure in the House of Commons.

[1] Maynooth College.

[2] As to these negotiations see *Life of Archbishop Tait*, ii. 8–14.

The real difficulties commenced when the Bill passed within the portals of the House of Lords. Owing to the action of Lord Salisbury, who led thirty-six peers into the lobby in favour of the second reading, and through the abstention of the two English Archbishops and some other leading prelates, the second reading, the fate of which to the last hung in the balance, was carried by a majority of thirty-three votes early in the morning of June 19. Then the ship found itself among the breakers.

It was the frequent observation of the famous parliamentary draughtsman, Sir Henry Thring, who had seen perhaps more of the inner history of parliamentary legislation than any man of his generation, that the great contests between parties and the threats of collision between the two Houses took place as often as not on some minor and comparatively unimportant point, around which parties continued fiercely to contend long after the main issue had been practically decided. This observation is pre-eminently true of the history of the Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Church of Ireland. The acceptance of the two great principles on which the Bill rested was felt by the opposition to have become inevitable. The details alone remained, yet the battle went on. When the Bill entered Committee in the Upper House, it had to face two different sets of critics. The regular Opposition, led by Lord Cairns, who had succeeded Lord Malmesbury as leader of the Conservative party, seeing that disestablishment was certain to take effect, concentrated the whole of their attention on the improvement of the terms relating to disendowment which were to affect the Church in its future corporate capacity and the clergy in regard to their particular benefices. On the other hand, a considerable body of peers, many of whom sat on the Liberal benches, were still anxious to introduce into the clauses of the Bill some recognition of the principle of concurrent endowment. They not unnaturally found a leader in Lord Russell, who, true to the views explained in the previous chapter, was not the least active of the critics. At the bidding of the ex-Prime Minister, the dry bones of many ancient Whig peers, who in their day

had been men of renown, again stirred on the battlefield and executed more than one disastrous attack on the flank of their own party; and though Lord Granville was generally able to rely on the support of Lord Russell against the amendments of Lord Cairns, he was not able to prevent Lord Cairns supporting the amendments of Lord Russell.

The result of these combined operations was that when the Bill was returned to the House of Commons, the estimated surplus of the Church had shrunk to small dimensions, owing to the improved terms which it was proposed to give to the clergy in order to enable them 'to compound, to commute, and to cut,' as the epigram of the day described the operation. The words also in the preamble negativing the principle of concurrent endowment in regard to the future application of such surplus as after these operations might still be in existence, had been struck out and others of an opposite tendency had been substituted. Several amendments also smacking of concurrent endowment had actually been inserted. All these alterations, subject to the grant of a further gift to the Church of 280,000*l.* and other concessions on minor points, were quickly struck out by the House of Commons, and on July 16 the Bill was once more on the dissecting table of the Upper House. There the battle raged once more around the same points. Meanwhile constant negotiations were proceeding; for at this stage the Queen—largely advised by the Dean of Windsor and by the Archbishop of Canterbury—reappeared as adviser and mediator. But for the moment these wise counsels produced no effect on the irate Opposition. This was seen on the night of the 20th, when the Peers did their worst, and after insisting on most of their amendments, ended by again striking out the words in the preamble distinctly negativing the idea of concurrent endowment. Mr. Gladstone, suffering from illness and under the strain of these events, was now disposed to throw up the Bill. Lord Granville inclined to wiser counsels, and when the hostile amendment on the preamble was carried, and it seemed that the final moment had come, considering that the responsibility lay with him, accepted the

adjournment, although the direction which he had received from the Prime Minister was to throw up the Bill.[1]

A deadlock now seemed to have come; and to make the situation apparently even more hopeless, minor circumstances were still further exasperating the already excited passions of the hour, for at the time when the Bill was on its way to the Lords, Mr. Bright had written a letter in which, anticipating a stormy passage for the measure, he had said that 'the Lords are not very wise, but there is sometimes profit to the people in their unwisdom,'[2] and Mr. Gladstone in a speech rejecting concurrent endowment and the postponement of the date of disestablishment, had declared the House of Lords 'to be living in a balloon,' out of touch with the real world and ignorant of what was going on below.

The phrase is now historical; but at the moment it was a subject not of merriment only, but of wrath. The Liberal leader in the House of Lords vainly attempted to pacify his irate antagonists by asking them to accept Mr. Bright's little outburst as merely a display of a pugnacious 'John-Bullism' characteristic of the speaker; and Mr. Gladstone's simile as a piece of humour, which if unexpected they might at least appreciate. So the battle went on.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

16 BRUTON STREET, LONDON, W., *July* 17, 1869.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—Many thanks. What you say is quite sufficient for my purpose.

'I should think a debate in your House was undesirable; but if you speak either instead of or after Gladstone, the important point

[1] The memorandum made by Mr. Gladstone of these events will be found in Mr. John Morley's *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 273–276. In the margin of his notes on the events of July 20 Lord Granville had a pencil note: 'The first order I received was to throw up the Bill, to which I answered that I could do no more than adjourn the debate.' The following passage occurs in the *Memoirs of an ex-Minister* (by Lord Malmesbury), ii. 409: 'Gladstone wanted to throw up the Bill after the debate of last Tuesday, when the words of the preamble were reinserted, but he was outvoted in his Cabinet, and it is said that Lord Granville told him that if he gave up the Bill he must find somebody else to lead the House of Lords.'

[2] *Hansard*, cxcvii. 4.

as regards the peers is, that your letter was meant as a statement of facts, and in no way as the holding out of a threat.

'I believe we shall carry the Bill, with amendments, but without injuring its principle.

'If so, and supposing you had never done anything else in your life, the share you have had in accomplishing this great work will make it pleasant to remember the needles which have been fired at you during the progress of it. 'Yours, G.'

But though men raged in the Senate and in the street, the great lawyer who at the moment led the Tory party in the House of Lords was fortunately a statesman with a clear vision of the facts of a situation, and one who at a crisis could rise superior to the passions of daily political warfare. The points around which the final struggle was taking place were the basis and amount of the compensation for the vested interests of the clergy and curates, the Ulster glebes, and the postponement of the question of the application of the surplus and the wording of the preamble as bearing on that question. Lord Cairns, although regarded as one of the most unbending champions of Irish Protestantism, was prepared to face the inevitable. He had realised that in the then temper of the country the Bill must sooner or later pass ; that further delay might prove dangerous to the interests which he represented, and that what he had to do was to agree with his adversary quickly, to make the best terms possible for his friends in Ireland while there was yet time, and close the bargain. Mr. Gladstone was still unwell, and Lord Granville became the principal negotiator. He had noticed the cleavage between the two sections of the Opposition in the House of Lords. In his heart he probably appreciated the force of the arguments of Lord Russell more than his official position and the necessities of the situation as it stood in 1868 made it possible for him to acknowledge. But Lord Cairns, not Lord Russell, was the master of the big battalions ; and if an agreement could be come to with him, the matter was settled. The supporters of concurrent endowment were talented but few. The advocates of a more liberal *solatium* to the clergy of the disestablished Church

were numerous as well as loud. On July 18, Lord Granville had already received an offer made through Lord Bessborough by Mr. Disraeli to settle for another million to be paid to the Irish Church; but this offer, after consulting Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Goschen, he refused. The same fate naturally awaited a belated but still higher demand made two days after by the Archbishop of Canterbury.[1] The situation was now critical in the extreme; but on the 22nd Lord Granville received a note from Lord Cairns offering 'to confer upon a mode by which, without sacrifice of principle or dignity upon either side, the remaining points of difference might be accepted.'[2] Lord Granville, after a conference with Mr. Gladstone, accordingly received Lord Cairns at the Colonial Office. 'I asked him,' Lord Granville relates, 'whether in his opinion he, the Archbishop, and I, could carry anything we agreed upon. He replied, "Yes, certainly."' The negotiation then proceeded rapidly. Lord Granville at once accepted improved terms for the clergy, but falling far short of what had been recently proposed. Lord Cairns then accepted the elimination of all the amendments to the clauses in which any trace of concurrent endowment was to be found. On the other hand, the preamble was to be left as last amended by the Lords in a shape in which concurrent endowment was neither affirmed nor negatived. 'The battle is now practically over. The skill, patience, assiduity, and sagacity of Lord Granville in the work of to-day,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to the Queen, 'demand from Mr. Gladstone the tribute of his warm admiration.'[3] But there was a third person who had contributed as much as either Lord Granville or Lord Cairns to this historic compromise; and they were the first to acknowledge it. 'No Archbishop,' Lord Granville wrote, 'is ever very handy in political communications; but it is very lucky that the Church had at this moment one as sensible and as little prejudiced as Dr. Tait. With either Sumner or

[1] The details of these negotiations are given in the *Life of Archbishop Tait.*

[2] Lord Cairns to Lord Granville, July 22, 1869.
*Life of Gladstone*, ii. 278.

Longley—for different reasons—we should have been shipwrecked, for without the consent of the English prelates the Lords would not have given way.'[1]

The agreement was quickly accepted by both Houses. Lord Cairns's strong will compelled the obedience even of those peers—and some of them counted as leaders—whom he had not consulted; and with the support of the Archbishops and Mr. Disraeli the necessary majorities did not fail him in either House. On July 26, 1869, the Bill for the disestablishment and disendowment of the Irish Church became law.

The length and difficulty of the contest in the Upper House determined Lord Granville to suggest a considerable creation of Liberal peers; and a recommendation to this effect was submitted to the Queen early in August by Mr. Gladstone.

'. . . Bright called at your house yesterday [Lord Granville wrote to him], but declined your servant's invitation to trouble you, and came here. We had a long talk about the Peerage. He is strongly opposed to your making any more hereditary peers. He thinks of making a speech soon about the House of Lords, suggesting that life peerages are a mistake, and that an addition of senators to the present body is what is required. He added, "Men like myself or Sir George Grey, if we were appealed to, might say, We are willing to give the five or six years that is left in us to the public service in this way." Holding these views, he thinks manufacturers especially, who have no business to make paupers of their younger sons, ought not to be asked. . .'[2]

Mr. Bright's objections were, however, academic. It was a formidable practical factor in the situation that the Queen objected.

'The Queen has written a philippic against the creation of peers. I am inditing a Ciceronian reply [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone]. On the peers, I consider myself entitled and bound to argue with my Sovereign; and to preach to my chief, luckily a convert.'[3]

[1] Draft letter, July 27, 1869. It is not clear to whom this letter was written.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 8, 1869.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 23, 24, 1869.

Lord Granville's letter to the Queen ran as follows :—

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE QUEEN.

BALMORAL CASTLE, *August* 23, 1869.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty, and ventures to make a few remarks on the answer which your Majesty proposes to send to Mr. Gladstone as to new peers.

'The present circumstances are different from any in which your Majesty has hitherto judiciously declined adding to the numbers of the House of Lords.

'Lord Derby in Opposition had a majority not only against Lord Russell, but against Lord Palmerston, than whom no *Liberal* Prime Minister could be more popular in the Lords.

'During his last short tenure of office, notwithstanding his assured majority, and his exclusive command of the Scotch and Irish Peerage, Lord Derby recommended fourteen new peers to your Majesty, many of them the most Tory class of country gentlemen. In the face of a Liberal majority in the House of Commons, he increased the Conservative majority in the Lords. Mr. Disraeli added a few. Circumstances obliged them to pass a Reform Bill which has created a greatly increased Liberal majority in the Commons, and which makes it idle to suppose that politics will run in precisely the same grooves as before.

'The position of your Majesty's Government in the Lords is almost intolerable. The majority were wise enough at the last moment to pass the Irish Church Bill, supported as it was by the Commons and the country, but it is absolute in all ordinary matters of legislation, on which the credit and utility of a Government so much depend. It does not scruple to exercise that power, a course ultimately sure to create great dissatisfaction.

'Lord Bessborough has lost from his list of 1850, of those whom he used to summon, forty-five peers, whose peerages have become extinct, who are incapacitated, or who in their own persons or in that of their sons have become Conservatives.

'The majority is between sixty and seventy, without counting Bishops, or Liberals who vote oftener for the Opposition than for the Government. No one could pretend that a dozen peers could swamp such a majority, but your Majesty's Government requires moral support in the House. They are not cordially supported by even the small minority, of whom the most eminent are ex-placemen, who many of them are not friends of Mr. Gladstone, and prefer the failure to the success of his colleagues. If only three or four

peers are created, they get awed by the atmosphere in which they find themselves.

'The Prince was averse to numerous creations, but it was at a time when there was no such hurtful anomaly as a majority of a hundred in the Commons, and an immense majority on the opposite side in the Lords. But even then his Royal Highness constantly told Lord Granville that the House was wanting in peers representing different classes and different types of ideas. Lord Salisbury the other day urged this deficiency upon the House as one of the reasons why it was losing ground in public opinion.

'Mr. Gladstone has taken great pains in selecting the list for your Majesty. He has endeavoured to avoid taking too many good and moderate men out of the House of Commons. Three of the persons named are possessors of enormous landed property (probably in the aggregate nearer 200,000*l.* than 100,000*l.* a year). The rest represent various classes, interests, and ideas, and are all men of property.

'The notion of a Jew peer is startling. "Rothschild, le premier Baron Juif," does not sound as well as "Montmorency, le premier Baron Chrétien," but he represents a class whose influence is great by their wealth, their intelligence, their literary connections, and their numerous seats in the House of Commons. It may be wise to attach them to the aristocracy, rather than to drive them into the democratic camp. The Carlton Club sent a Jew to be their candidate at Sandwich. Lord Shaftesbury wrote to Mr. Gladstone to press Sir Moses Montefiore's claims to a peerage.

'The policy of your Majesty's Government is to treat Roman Catholics for the future with equality in proportion to their numbers. Lord Granville does not remember the creation of a Catholic peer, notwithstanding their wealth and bulk. The old Catholic peers cannot speak. They cannot think for themselves and are under the direction of their bishops. Sir John Acton would be excluded if Dr. Manning had the power to do so. He and Lord Edward are proposed as greatly superior to any Irish Catholic who could be recommended to your Majesty for the honour. Lord Redesdale, the strongest of Protestant Conservatives, stated in the House that he saw no objection even to Dr. Manning having a seat in the Lords.[1]

'Mr. Gladstone has hitherto refrained from troubling your Majesty. Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville were of opinion that

[1] Among those whom it was proposed to raise to the Peerage were Baron Nathaniel de Rothschild, Sir John Acton, and Lord Edward Howard; who shortly afterwards respectively became Lord Rothschild, Lord Acton, and Lord Howard of Glossop.

it was better to avoid making any peers till after the Irish Church Bill had been dealt with by the House of Lords.

'Lord Granville is sure that anything which can give a more Liberal tinge to the House of Lords, and put it more in harmony with the House of Commons, is useful.

'It is disadvantageous to the Lords that it should be difficult to initiate measures in it. It is not good for the Crown that its servants should be helpless in either branch of the Legislature.'

The Queen eventually gave way. 'Her Majesty,' Lord Granville told Mr. Gladstone at the same time, 'is dying of laughter' at the manner in which 'people *submitted* to her to do what she did not wish to do, and not to do what she wished to do.'[1]

Not yet fully recovered from the effects of the great sorrow which had befallen her in 1861, the Queen was at this time still unable to bear the burden of attendance at public functions in addition to the strain of ordinary business. By those who were unaware of the reasons, her continued retirement was resented; and an Irish peer, typical of the peculiar form of loyalty existing in Ulster, which at one moment proclaims an almost servile allegiance to the Crown, and at another proposes to kick that emblem of State into the Boyne, thought fit to threaten a motion in the House of Lords. Adverse comment was also apprehended in the House of Commons, where a vote of money for the establishment of Prince Arthur was shortly to be moved. The Queen was of opinion that a Ministerial explanation in both Houses might be made, and this delicate question led to communications between Sir Arthur Helps, Mr. Theodore Martin, and Lord Granville.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. HELPS.

BRUTON STREET, *August* 3, 1871.

'MY DEAR HELPS,—I have communicated with Gladstone, and also confidentially with Sir George Grey, on the important matter of the Queen's letter to you, and I do not think that, unless arising naturally out of circumstances, Ministerial explanations in the two Houses of Parliament would have a good effect, or do anything

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 25, 1869.

than afford food for disagreeable discussion. It is easy to explain a particular fact, such as the two occasions to which the Queen alludes; but when Mr. Martin complains that a few words spoken authoritatively by her Majesty's Ministers, which might scatter these studied falsehoods to the winds, remain unspoken, he should state what the words are which would remove what he calls "a state of feeling which was undoubtedly widely spread, and might become dangerous," "a dissatisfaction not confined to the ignorant and disaffected, but which has taken a much wider range," and "a sense of disappointment that her Majesty is less present among them than they wish her to be," and the fact "that people in a higher sphere miss the invaluable influence upon society which her Majesty's personal presence operated through so many years." It would be easy for Mr. Gladstone and for me to explain how accessible the Queen was to her Ministers; how well her Majesty kept herself informed on all matters of public importance, whether parliamentary or administrative; her interest in the manner in which our foreign policy is carried out; and the judicious supervision the Queen exercises over appointments and the distribution of honours. But when we have to state what the Queen can and cannot do, we can only give the opinion of her Majesty's medical advisers, and unfortunately there is an almost universal opinion that Sir William Jenner, notwithstanding his great professional reputation, is somewhat swayed by a natural desire to avoid saying anything which might run counter to the Queen's wishes. You know how difficult it is to argue against preconceived popular impressions. There is no doubt that there is a strong desire to see the Queen exercise that influence over society, and indirectly over a wider circle, which was wanting in former reigns, and which the Queen re-established by her personal character, her tact, and her conduct. There is, on the other hand, a slowness to understand the difficulty which her Majesty feels in undertaking some of the external functions of her position. That this has affected her Majesty's real popularity, or the respect and gratitude which is felt for great services to her country, I do not believe, but it is enough to make us all desirous that her Majesty should meet to the utmost extent possible the public wish. Hardly a week passes during which Mr. Gladstone and I are not reproached for not pressing the Queen on this subject, and among persons who do so there are some of those who are the most intimate with and most attached to her Majesty. We have done so on some occasions, even so far as to cause her Majesty some annoyance, I am afraid, and possibly with the contrary effect to what was intended.

'I had prepared a statement in reply to Lord Oranmore, in case of his persisting with his motion, but it would have been an unseemly thing that the House of Lords should have begun to discuss a motion to add something like a censure upon her Majesty, to the concurrence in the grant to Prince Arthur; and some of the papers would have profited by the opportunity to declare that it was a symptom of what was the opinion of independent peers, although those bound by party ties on either side felt it their duty to object.

'I should like to say I think this year unfavourable. When the time comes nearer, and the matter can be tranquilly considered, I do not doubt it will be found practicable next year to make such arrangements as may remove the feeling which now exists, and, although merely a slight coating over the strong loyalty and affection of the nation, might be worked for ulterior political objects.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

In the new Government it has been already stated Lord Granville was Colonial Secretary. The affairs of the colonies and their relations with the mother country have been the subject of so much discussion in recent years, that it may be difficult to realise that there was once a time when they were a matter of considerable indifference. Yet already in 1869 the first signs of a change were to be noticed in the order of ideas which had caused statesmen, not of one party only, to look forward placidly to the day when the colonies would move in orbits entirely their own, and made Sir William Molesworth appear singular in his generation, for holding a different opinion. When Lord Granville became Colonial Secretary, attention was already being directed to the subject of Imperial defence, which involved the question of the maintenance of the remaining garrisons of British troops in the colonies. Special importance seemed to attach to the subject owing to the renewal of the rebellion of the Maoris in New Zealand, the Fenian attack on Canada, and the Red River insurrection. It had been the settled policy of successive Governments to diminish the garrisons gradually, partly because of the financial injustice of continuing to throw the main burden of colonial defence on the mother country alone, partly

because it was desirable to bring some pressure to bear on the colonial population to exert themselves for their own protection, and in New Zealand to discourage them from needless provocation of the natives. In keeping with this order of ideas, the garrisons were withdrawn at the end of 1869 from New Zealand, when the insurrection had ceased to be dangerous, and the maintenance of any large force in Canada was announced to be only a temporary expedient which present circumstances rendered necessary. An immediate outcry arose at home, and a Committee was formed in London in which the voice of the colonies professed to make itself heard, but in which the hand of the Conservative party organiser could also be recognised. This Committee put forward a proposal for a Conference in London, in which the heads of the Committee were themselves to figure largely among the representatives of the colonies, and the attack, which was powerfully backed by the Conservative press, assumed a dangerous character. Had Lord Granville, it was asked, forgotten Nova Scotia, and the question of the garrison at Halifax, and also the general discontent which it was alleged existed in the Dominion? Was the policy intended to create a state of affairs such as would lead to separation by a certain, if friendly, process? Was this the reason why Sir Alexander Galt had been decorated, despite a frank confession by him that he looked ultimately to the separation of the Dominion from the Crown? If such were the policy, it ought at least to be frankly avowed.

The proposals of the Committee fortunately met with but little support in the colonies themselves. One Government, that of Queensland, even commented strongly on 'the mischievous interference of self-constituted colonial societies and other pretended representatives of the colonies in England;' and it hardly needed a carefully written despatch of the Colonial Minister to persuade those to whom it was principally addressed that their wishes were more likely to be effectually brought before the Home Government by the recognised Agents in London, and the Governors appointed

by the Crown, than by the unauthorised persons who professed to act as their mouthpiece. But there were more serious critics than the Committee. The *Spectator* lent its advocacy to the attack in the press, and Lord Russell and Lord Carnarvon in Parliament. Lord Russell feared that the withdrawal of the garrisons had been settled in haste, and he wrote Lord Granville a strongly worded protest. 'Theoretically you assume,' Lord Granville replied, 'that I wish to get rid of Canada, Australia, and India. Our relations with North America are of a very delicate character. The best solution of them would probably be that in the course of time and in the most friendly spirit the Dominion should find itself strong enough to proclaim her independence;'[1] but he said there was no present question of anything of the kind, and as to the position of India, which Lord Russell had also mentioned, it was an entirely distinct question from that of the English-speaking colonies of our own race.

. . . 'Johnny Russell [he told Mr. Gladstone] wrote a violent criticism to me on my colonial policy, in which he compared himself to Oliver Cromwell and Chatham, and me to Lord North and George Grenville. I rejoined much too good-humouredly, my private secretary thinks; and I have had a rejoinder, in which amongst other things he says: "That which I wish to see is a Colonial Representative Assembly sitting apart from our Lords and Commons, voting us supplies in aid for our navy and army, and receiving in return assurances of support from the Queen." Shall we immortalise your Administration by proposing this?'[2]

A Departmental Committee had been appointed in 1859, consisting of Mr. Hamilton, Mr. Godley, and Sir T. Elliott, respectively representing the Treasury, the War Office, and the Colonial Office. Their report pointed out how, on the one side, the scattering of the British army in small detachments all over the world injured discipline and organisation, and disproportionately increased, because it multiplied, the expenses of the staff; how it planted little garrisons down in exposed places inviting attack, and left them there 'a deduc-

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Russell, August 28, 1869.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, September 2, 1869

tion from our available strength and ready-made prisoners in time of war;' while, on the other hand, it destroyed a proper spirit of self-reliance, and enfeebled the national character in the colonies themselves. [1]

Lord Carnarvon, who had been among Lord Granville's predecessors at the Colonial Office, did not go so far as Lord Russell, but he commented in Parliament with great bitterness on what he termed the unsympathising character and the harsh and almost unfriendly tone of the despatches of Lord Granville, as having unnecessarily added to the unpopularity of the policy which they unfolded. He entirely failed however to indicate where the passages to which he referred were to be found, though challenged to point them out. He next suggested a despatch to define in black and white the exact relations of the mother country to the self-governing colonies in regard to defence.

'I may be wrong [Lord Granville replied], but I have great doubts whether such a proceeding would not have the effect rather of dissolving than of cementing the union. Would it not at once excite the greatest possible jealousy among the colonies, and give rise to the greatest suspicion that we intended to take back from the colonies some portion of that perfect freedom which had been granted to them? I do not agree with the noble Earl that the great bond between the colonies and this country is the military protection afforded to the former; for I am of opinion that the ties which bind us together are loyalty to the Crown, goodwill between the colonies and the mother country, and a reciprocity of mutual advantages. When this state of things shall cease to exist, the idea of compelling by force any great and self-governing colony to remain connected with this country is an idea which no statesman would entertain; though no statesman should take too seriously any lightly expressed wish on the part of a colony for separation from this country.' [2]

Lord Carnarvon, and Lord Granville's immediate predecessor, the Duke of Buckingham, were moreover open to the damaging retort that it was their language and conduct, if any, which had been harsh and unfriendly, and that if they had not actually themselves initiated the policy in question, which

[1] The report is summarised in the work on *Colonial Policy*, pp. 380–383, by Mr. Charles Adderley (Lord Norton).

[2] *Hansard*, cxcviii. 783; cxcix. 1334–1346.

had been that of the Colonial Office ever since the time of the Duke of Newcastle, they had certainly accepted and continued it during their own short tenure of office. 'It is not with the object of being useful,' Lord Carnarvon had written on December 1, 1866, to the Colonial Government of New Zealand, 'that the troops are now in New Zealand. The colony has long since adopted the duty of protecting itself, and her Majesty's troops are no longer there for the purpose of protecting it, but merely remain, or ought to remain, in default of the transports necessary for sending them away.' The decision not to retain the 18th Regiment had been actually received in the colony on June 1, 1867, while the Duke of Buckingham was still Secretary of State. Lord Carnarvon also himself — and it was an ex-Conservative Under Secretary who pointed it out—had instituted the gradual withdrawal of English troops from the Cape. Lord Granville was now only 'carrying out the same process boldly begun by the Duke of Buckingham, as far as circumstances allowed him, in Canada,' and it was 'the early meddling with New Zealand from home' which, in the opinion of the same high authority, together 'with the retention of separate control over the native policy, caused and continued the Maori war.' [1]

In colonies less advanced than Canada or New Zealand, Lord Granville was, however, not disposed to yield so easily to the entire surrender of the rights of the Colonial Office and the Crown in favour of the legislative supremacy and sole responsibility of the local legislatures. In Natal a controversy arose—one of many—in which the whole of the principles involved in these controversies on either side came into play. Lord Granville insisted on the co-ordinate authority of the Crown and the Legislature being maintained. The colony stood firm by the assertion of the claims which it had made, and the result was a compromise which, Lord Granville would probably have admitted, was not one of his victories.

Of the two hostile movements in Canada, the Fenian invasion, as it was termed, was easily dealt with. Far more serious was the movement known as the Red River Rebellion.

[1] Mr. Charles Adderley (Lord Norton) on *Colonial Policy*, 1869, pp. 388–390.

Repeated attempts had been made to induce the Canadian Government and the Hudson Bay Company to agree on the terms on which the territories of the latter were to be transferred to the Dominion.

'After some time and protracted negotiations, Lord Granville brought the representatives of the two parties to the Colonial Office, saw each in different rooms, going from one room to the other, and finally succeeded in getting terms agreed to. Thus the matter was decided, and as a result Manitoba and the Red River Territory were thrown open to colonisation, instead of being kept shut up as a close hunting preserve. Lord Kimberley had been a governor of the Hudson Bay Company. The day the arrangement was settled, there happened to be a Cabinet, and when the Ministers were seated at the table, Lord Granville threw across the table to him a half-sheet of paper with this question written upon it, "What is your sincere opinion? Is there any possibility of settling the Hudson Bay Company by an amicable arrangement?" Lord Kimberley answered, "My sincere opinion is that there is very little chance." On getting Lord Kimberley's answer, Lord Granville good-humouredly informed him that a settlement had just been come to.'[1]

A section of the population, fearing the loss of ancient rights and privileges under a more regular form of Government, resisted the annexation and found a leader in Louis Riel. The story of the final suppression of the rebellion does not, however, fall within the period of Lord Granville's tenure of the Colonial Secretaryship, for on June 27 an unlooked-for event had occurred which led to the severance of his connection with the Office.

'It is impossible [he had written to the Duke of Argyll early in that month] to be too much alarmed at the state of health of the most eminent of the Cabinet. Poor Bright is gone as far as this session is concerned. Clarendon was only saved from gout in the stomach by strong stimulants to his feet. Gladstone told Bessborough yesterday that he felt sometimes alarmed for his own head. Cardwell at the last Cabinet sat close into the fire, looking as if he wished to cut his throat, which was probably only the beginning of an influenza. I cannot say how sorry I am about Bright.'[2]

Lord Clarendon's recovery was only temporary, and on June 27 he was no more. His death might not inaptly

[1] Sir Robert Meade's notes.

[2] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, June 5, 1870.

have been compared with that of the great statesman of the reign of George III., one of whose last acts was almost on his death-bed to read and approve the preliminary articles of the Peace of Paris. Like Lord Carteret, Lord Clarendon passed away, as the House of Lords was told by Lord Granville on the evening of the fatal day, 'dying under the weight of affairs, in the very act of trying to arrange a matter necessary to civilisation in Europe,'[1] and busily occupied to the last in attempting to renew the thread of the confidential negotiations for disarmament initiated early in the year between him and Count Daru, who for a few brief weeks had been Minister for Foreign Affairs of France in the Ollivier Administration. These negotiations at the time were apparently communicated to nobody except the Queen, Mr. Gladstone, and Lord Granville.

'He was one of my dearest and most intimate friends [Lord Granville continued], and I have had the opportunity in political life as his colleague of observing his singular ability, his great sagacity, his vast experience, the moderation of his views, and those brilliant conversational powers which were almost exclusively used for the purposes of conciliation, and gave him such personal weight, not only with his own countrymen, but with all the sovereigns of Europe with whom he came into contact, with their political ministers, and with the diplomatic representatives of the whole world.'[2]

The memory of his industry and of the skill of his pen still remains among the great traditions of the Foreign Office. Mr. Gladstone once told Lord Lyttelton that 'his *forte* was to put other people's ideas into good English, and that Lord Wodehouse once showed him a big Blue Book which he said was all written by Lord Clarendon himself.'[3] On the Order Book of the House of Lords the Irish Land Bill stood for consideration on the evening of his death. Lord Clarendon had been Viceroy of Ireland, and the adjournment of the House with such business before it would, Lord Granville

[1] Lord Carteret at the time had become Lord Granville. He is here spoken of under his earlier and better known title.

[2] *Hansard*, third series, ccii. 950.

[3] Lord Lyttelton to Lord Granville, undated, 1863.

said, be no fit tribute of respect to the memory of the deceased statesman, who 'had always postponed everything to public business and his sense of duty to his country.'[1]

Lord Clarendon had had 'the unspeakable advantage,' to quote Charles Greville, 'of being plain George Villiers, and having to fight his way in the world,' before he succeeded to the peerage in 1838 by the death of his uncle. Nature had endowed him with great acuteness, and experience had given him comprehensive views. In the opinion of Lord Campbell, who had sat in the Cabinet with him, he was versed in 'all political science.'[2] Though far from a ready debater, he knew how to use his knowledge; and if roused by an attack could speak with effect, as he proved on a memorable occasion during his Viceroyalty, when Lord Derby made an onslaught on his Administration as eloquent as it was unjust. Lord Campbell thought him next to Lord John Russell the most fit to be Prime Minister of all his colleagues. 'A hater of platitudes, Lord Clarendon understood how to dash off in a few daring if slightly contemptuous phrases the main features of a political situation, and the leading traits of the European statesmen whom he had known; yet these conversational indiscretions were always good-natured;'[3] and if to the staid diplomatists of an old-fashioned school they may have occasionally appeared unusual and a little alarming, they were not the less for that reason the delight of the listeners whom they attracted. In a complete collection of his letters the world may some day enjoy a record of the time equal in interest to the *Letters of Lord Chesterfield*, but one imbued with a kindlier spirit, in which, instead of the voice of the witty cynic, the reader will seem perhaps to hear the echo of 'the ringing and silvery laugh' which his friends loved; and was 'deemed their best guerdon' by the amateur company which in winter time graced the boards of the little theatre at The Grove in Hertfordshire. One of this company, a lady who shared his

[1] *Hansard*, third series, ccii. 950.
[2] Lord Campbell, *Autobiography*, ii. 212.
[3] Sir E. Russell, *That Reminds Me*, pp. 26, 27.

social gifts, and was herself well able to judge, has recorded how

'in brilliancy and playfulness of wit he surpassed all his contemporaries; but it was without effort, and there was no self-consciousness. Deeply read, serious when seriousness was in place, he was withal skilled in the profound art of nonsense. Neither did he reserve his bright sallies or his more serious views for the learned and superior, or for such men as Sir George Cornewall Lewis, his brother-in-law, or his brother, Charles Villiers; although they met him on more equal grounds than the majority of his companions. Lord Clarendon in fact did not demand to be tried by his social peers, for in the society of the women who surrounded him—his own wife, his own daughters and nieces—he shone as brightly and took as great a delight in captivating his listeners as he could possibly have done had his audience been one of the largest and most distinguished, as it certainly was the most loving, in the world.'[1]

Lord Granville had once already occupied the Foreign Office. He was now indicated by a general consensus of opinion as the successor of Lord Clarendon, and the offer from Mr. Gladstone did not fail to follow quickly. *Tu Marcellus eris*, Lord Russell had written in 1852. The prophecy was now fulfilled at an interval of eighteen years; and almost the first letter of congratulation which Lord Granville received on his new honours and increased responsibilities came, as was fitting, from the prophet.

Before the year 1870 was out, Mr. Bright had been obliged to send in his resignation. By none of his colleagues was his retirement more lamented than by Lord Granville.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *November* 21, 1870.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—Gladstone has told me most confidentially of your resolve. It is not for me to advise you against what you think is your duty, but I cannot resist telling you how deeply I grieve publicly, privately, and personally, at this temporary break in our official connection.

'You have been kindness itself to me. Your loss in the Cabinet and on the Treasury Bench is irreparable. There are questions now pending in my department on which you would have been of the

[1] *Mary Boyle Her Book*, pp. 269, 270.

greatest use to me. Our views on the Eastern question are the same as to the end, although it is probable we might differ as to some of the means. Your guidance would have been invaluable as regards the United States.

'I can conceive no greater object than to put our relations on a satisfactory footing with them. Our present position cripples us in every way. Not only would it do so if we wished for war, but it impedes our pacific efforts, making people attribute to fear that which is prompted by a sense of duty.

'I trust I may talk over all these things with you soon, in a perfectly restored state of health. 'Yours sincerely, G.'

*December* 18, 1870.

'My dear Bright,—I have read your letter to Gladstone with great regret, but I believe you are right in your decision.

'Rest is incompatible with Downing Street and Westminster, and you will probably recover your perfect strength by positive repose for a few months, which you might be years in obtaining if you did a little but exciting and responsible work.

'You may be sure that no one will rejoice more than myself when I see you again at your old drudgery.

'We are taking several bites at that big cherry—reconciliation with the States.

'I have sent Sir John Rose to New York and Washington to do that which it is difficult for Thornton to do without committing us. He is to go on his own commercial business. He is to have no authority, but a boast that he was intimate with me when I was in the Colonial Office. He is to ascertain from the Government and from the Opposition what chance there is of our simultaneously agreeing to some beginning of a negotiation, if it were only to assent to a joint Commission, who, without being commissioned to settle anything, might arrange in what manner each question in discussion might be best considered.

'I have confidence in his tact and discretion. He knows the States, and has the confidence of Sir John Macdonald.

'We of course wish Rose's mission to be a *perfect secret.*

'I believe the Luxembourg affair will not give much trouble; and although there are hitches, I hope we shall get out of the Russian difficulty without giving much offence to any but those who wish for a useless and troublesome war for its own sake.

'Do not trouble yourself to answer me.

'Yours sincerely,

'Granville.

'The Queen takes a lively interest in your perfect recovery.'

## CHAPTER II

### THE FRANCO-GERMAN WAR

### 1870–1871

WHEN Lord Granville became Foreign Secretary in the summer of 1870, a momentary diminution had taken place in the warlike tension which had long prevailed on the Continent. Schemes of disarmament were in the air. The precarious health of Napoleon III. seemed likely to prevent any plunge on his part into political adventures; and an attempt was being made under the directing hand of M. Ollivier to liberalise the Government. When, therefore, it began to be suddenly whispered that serious questions had again arisen between France and Prussia, the report was as unexpected as it was unwelcome. Diplomatists only shook their heads the more when the question was found to relate to the affairs of Spain. It was a tradition in France that intervention in the affairs of Spain brought disaster, and the opposition of the Emperor to the candidature of a Prince of the House of Hohenzollern for the throne of that country—for this was the new issue—called to mind the rivalries out of which the War of the Spanish Succession had grown in the previous century, and the troublous history of the 'Spanish marriages' in more recent times.[1] On September 30, 1868, Queen Isabella had been dethroned and a Republic proclaimed, but the still unsettled condition of the country was pointing in 1870 to the restoration of royalty as the only means of escape from revolution. In the course of the winter of 1869–70 the Spanish Government had consequently applied to Anthony,

[1] *Mémoires Historiques*, par M. Mignet, Paris, 1854, p. 427.

Prince of Hohenzollern, requesting to be informed whether either of his two sons would be disposed to come forward as a candidate for the vacant Spanish throne. The Prince then conceived that his younger son, Prince Frederick, could alone be eligible, as the provisions of the family statutes and the position of the Hereditary Prince Leopold, as heir in the family entail, formed obstacles too great to admit of the Spanish Crown being offered to him. With the consent of the King of Prussia as head of the family, an offer was formally made to Prince Frederick. It was declined by him on the ground that he felt no vocation to fill the vacant throne, and the King of Prussia declared that he could not advise the acceptance of the Crown, much less issue any positive command on the subject. The refusal of the Spanish Throne by Prince Frederick was then officially notified at Madrid.

'Spain—Spain—Spain—' Lord Clarendon was reported to have said—'well, Spanish dynasties go and come; Spanish kings and queens go and come, and Spanish ministries go and come; but there's one thing in Spain that is always the same—they never answer letters.'[1] On this occasion—and it was unfortunate for the peace of the world—Marshal Prim, thinking possibly that the Provisional Government should set an example to future kings and queens, took to answering letters quickly, and continued the correspondence in the hope that the Princely House of Hohenzollern might be yet induced to alter their decision. A change of views such as the Marshal conceived possible actually took place, inasmuch as after further consideration the Prince of Hohenzollern himself and his eldest son Prince Leopold felt more inclined than hitherto to modify the provisions of the family entail; but they were unwilling, after the family had once declined the Throne, to be the first to move in the matter again. When this state of things became known at Madrid, further negotiations ensued between Marshal Prim and the head of the Princely House, to whom the Hereditary Prince had by this time notified his

[1] Sir Edward Russell, *That Reminds Me*, p. 27.

willingness to accept. He next asked the consent of the King of Prussia. The King was disagreeably surprised to hear of the revival of a question which he had considered as wholly at an end, but signified his consent when the Hereditary Prince declared that he felt a vocation for the undertaking.

The news of the Hohenzollern candidature at once raised a violent commotion in France; and on July 6 the Duc de Gramont, who early in the year had succeeded Count Daru as Minister for Foreign Affairs, declared amid the enthusiastic applause of the Chamber that France would not quietly look on if a foreign State disturbed the balance of power by placing one of her Princes 'on the throne of Charles V.' Europe was visibly standing on the threshold of a great war. On the same day Lord Granville received the seals of the Foreign Office. The previous day, between three and four o'clock, Mr. Hammond, the experienced Under Secretary of the Department, had told him that with the exception of the trouble caused by the recent murder in Greece of Mr. Vyner and his friends by brigands, he had never during his long experience known 'so great a lull in foreign affairs,' and that he was not aware of any pressing question which Lord Granville would have to deal with immediately.[1] By the time Lord Granville was addressing

[1] *Hansard*, cciii. 3. See also a letter in the *Times* of November 20, 1902, from Mr. Frederick Leveson-Gower.

'SIR HORACE RUMBOLD AND THE LATE LORD GRANVILLE.

'*To the Editor of the "Times."*'

'SIR,—My friend Sir Horace Rumbold, in his article in the October number of the *National Review*, after describing the ignorance of the Foreign Office of the critical state of affairs in Europe before the outbreak of the war between France and Prussia, writes as follows:—

'"With such information as this before our Foreign Office, supplemented, no doubt, by still more valuable reports from other quarters, the statement made by Lord Granville in the House of Lords, after the lamented death of Lord Clarendon on the very eve of war, that the aspect of European affairs was so unusually peaceful, has always seemed to me surprising."

'This statement gives an erroneous impression of what took place.

'On referring to *Hansard's Parliamentary Debates*, cciii. 3, it will be seen that my brother the late Lord Granville made the following statement in the House of Lords on Monday, July 11:—

'"I had the honour of receiving the seals of the Foreign Office last Wednesday July 6). On the previous day I had an unofficial communication with the able

the House next day for the first time as Foreign Minister, the sky had already grown dark and the sea of politics was streaked with foam.

'I have indeed fallen among thorns [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Russell]. The first intimation arrived while we were discussing amendments on the report of the Irish Land Bill. In the morning Hammond had congratulated me on the "greatest lull" at the Foreign Office he remembered: "no other matter of pressing importance but Greece."'[1]

The succeeding week was spent by Lord Granville in abortive efforts to prevent war.

'I felt [he said] that our position was very much that of a man trying to prevent a fire with inflammable materials all around him, and with matches all ready to ignite; and that it was not the moment to go into elaborate inquiries as to who had brought the materials, or the rights and wrongs of the case; but that we should endeavour as soon as possible to remove the materials, and to prevent the greatest of calamities.'[2]

In addressing Spain and Prussia, he accordingly omitted altogether any reference to some of the most obvious reasons for peace, and touched but lightly upon other arguments

and experienced Under Secretary, Mr. Hammond, at the Foreign Office, and he told me, it being then three or four o'clock, that with the exception of the sad and painful subject about to be discussed this evening (the recent murder of British subjects by brigands in Greece) he had never during his long experience known so great a lull in foreign affairs, and that he was not aware of any important question that I should have to deal with."

'It therefore appears that the statement was a quotation of what was said by Mr. Hammond to Lord Granville, and not an original observation of his own, that it was made to him the day before he received the seals of the Foreign Office, and that at the time of the delivery of his speech (as is proved by a subsequent passage in it) he was aware of the serious state of affairs, and was using his best endeavours with the French and Prussian Governments to avert the war. This is confirmed by a published despatch written by Lord Granville to Lord Lyons on July 8.

'Sir Horace Rumbold is not the first person who has supposed that Lord Granville stated it as his own opinion that "there had never been so great a lull in foreign affairs," and I am therefore all the more anxious that the facts of the case should be accurately made known.

'I am, Sir, your obedient servant,

'*November* 19.' 'F. LEVESON-GOWER.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Russell, July 7, 1870.

[2] Lord Granville in the House of Lords, July 28, 1870; *Hansard*, cciii. 1052.

of a controversial character, preferring to base his plea on an appeal to motives honourable to both France and Prussia, and of a patriotic character, which might be adduced by an impartial friend, without in any degree hurting the pride or the national self-esteem of either country. Success at first seemed likely, and for a moment war was believed to have been averted, for the reigning Prince of Hohenzollern announced that he had forbidden the candidature of his eldest son, seeing what the probable result would be. How the cup was dashed from the lips of European diplomacy was recounted by Lord Lyons in words having, as Lord Granville said, 'almost the interest of a work of fiction, were it not connected with so serious a subject.' The despatch bore date July 14, and contained the tale of the now historic Ems interview.

'My despatch of the previous day [Lord Lyons wrote] was sent off at the usual hour (seven o'clock) in the evening. During the early part of the night which followed, the hope that it might yet be possible to preserve peace seemed to gain strength. It was understood that the renunciation of his pretensions by Prince Leopold himself had come to confirm that made on his behalf by his father, and that the Spanish Government had formally declared to the Government of France that the candidature of the Prince was at an end. The language of influential members of the Cabinet was more pacific, and it was thought possible that some conciliatory intelligence might arrive from Prussia, and enable the Government to pronounce the whole question to be at an end. But in the morning all was changed. A telegram was received from the French Chargé d'Affaires at Berlin, stating that an article had appeared in the Prussian Ministerial organ, the *North German Gazette*, to the effect that the French Ambassador had requested the King to promise never to allow a Hohenzollern to be a candidate for the throne of Spain, and that his Majesty had thereupon refused to receive the Ambassador, and sent him word by an aide-de-camp that he had nothing more to say to him.'[1]

In what circumstances this article, or political note, appeared, has been recounted by Prince Bismarck himself in his *Memoirs*. By the omission of some words and the

[1] Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, July 14, 1870; *Hansard*, cciii. 1053.

altered position given to others, a far graver effect was given to the accounts of the interview between the King and M. Benedetti at Ems described in the original telegram from Herr von Abeken, than the actual facts or the original text of the telegram warranted.[1] Count Bismarck had at one swift glance recognised that war could under no circumstances be much longer averted. He preferred himself to have it sooner rather than later, and having assured himself at an interview with Count Moltke and Count Roon that all was ready, he launched his thunderbolt by a publication of the altered telegram. Next morning all Germany was convinced that the King had been insulted by the French Ambassador: in the evening all France was persuaded that the Ambassador had been publicly slighted by the King.

Speaking in the French Chamber on July 11, the Duc de Gramont told his audience that up to the present 'all the European Cabinets' had appeared 'to admit the legitimacy of the French complaints' in regard to the Hohenzollern candidature, and M. Ollivier followed in the same strain. 'We commenced negotiations,' he said, 'with the foreign Powers to invoke their good offices with Prussia in order that the legitimacy of our grievances might be recognised. The majority of the Powers admitted, with more or less warmth, the justice of our demands.' On July 18 attention was called in the House of Lords to these statements, which appeared to suggest that the British Foreign Office might have taken a partisan attitude in the controversy, and even have supported the claim of France to interfere in regard to the Hohenzollern candidature: a claim which public opinion in England in no manner endorsed.

In one of his despatches Lord Granville had stated that the Hohenzollern candidature had not so far received the approbation of the King of Prussia, which at the moment

[1] 'In dieser Ueberzeugung machte ich von der mir durch Abeken übermittelten königlichen Ermächtigung Gebrauch, den Inhalt des Telegramms zu veröffentlichen; und reducirte in Gegenwart meiner beiden Tischgäste das Telegramm durch Streichungen, ohne ein Wort hinzusetzen oder zu ändern, auf die nachstehende Fassung.' (Then follows the amended text.) (Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. ii. ch. xxii. p. 90.)

was true; and that 'in the interest of Spain itself' the King might deem it his duty to discourage it.[1] Upon these words the Duc de Gramont founded his contention that the justice of the French case had been admitted by the British Foreign Office.

'It is not [Lord Granville observed in reply] as to the facts that there is any difference, but that M. de Gramont has drawn an inference, which is always, of course, a matter of opinion.'[2]

And he referred his hearers to the papers which he was about to lay before Parliament to justify his denial of the accuracy of the inference.

War was now inevitable. The streets of Paris were filled with excited crowds shouting, 'A Berlin!' and chanting the *Marseillaise*. At Berlin they were singing the *Wacht am Rhein* and Luther's Hymn. But at Berlin there was purpose. At Paris drift and confusion reigned supreme. The parts of 1806 were exactly reversed, and a recent French historian of these events has reprinted, as the best description of what he saw in 1870, the narrative in which Gentz described the condition of Prussia just before Jena.[3] Nevertheless, diplomacy tried a last effort. On becoming aware that the candidature of the Prince of Hohenzollern, though at an end, had not been withdrawn in a mode which appeared to the French Government consistent with their interests and their honour, Lord Granville suggested to Count Bismarck that, while fully admitting that France was not justified in insisting on a guarantee for the future from Prussia against a renewal of the candidature—for such had been the French demand—yet if France would waive that demand, the King could consistently with his own honour communicate to the French Government his approval of the Prince's withdrawal. This suggestion, however, proved unacceptable. It was

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus, July 6, 1870.

[2] *Hansard*, cciii. 382; Gramont, *La France et la Prusse*, ch. iv. p. 86, where references are given to the papers in the Blue Book on which the Duke depended to justify his assertion.

[3] Sorel, *Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande*, ii. 390; Gentz, *Mémoires et Lettres Inédits*; *Journal*, Octobre 1806, which M. Sorel reprints.

refused both by the Duc de Gramont and by Count Bismarck, though there was reason to believe that the King had at first been not altogether unwilling to listen to it. Lord Granville then put forward, within an hour of the refusal of the two Powers becoming known, a further suggestion, viz. that under the 23rd Protocol of the Congress of 1856 both the contending Powers should have recourse to the good offices of a friendly State. But events were now moving with terrific speed; and the proposal only arrived almost simultaneously with the declaration of war.[1]

The strict observance of neutrality now became the immediate duty of the hour. But the observance of neutrality, however simple in theory, is not always easy in practice. The prejudices caused by the memories of the Danish War and the attitude of Lord Palmerston still existed. There was a belief in Germany that the British Government was hostile, and hardly had war been declared before a controversy arose between the British and Prussian Governments. It was attempted by the latter to lay down the doctrine that the mere fact of the exportation of arms and coal to France constituted in itself a breach of neutrality, and the controversy around this question had the unfortunate effect of confirming and stimulating the belief in the ill-will of Great Britain.[2]

'There is already a feeling [Lord Augustus Loftus wrote from Berlin] that her Majesty's Government have a partial leaning towards France, and this incident will tend to confirm it. Count Bismarck said that "Great Britain should have forbidden France to enter on war. She was in a position to do so, and her interests and those of Europe demanded it of her. He observed that if Germany should be victorious, of which he had every confidence, the balance of power in Europe would be preserved; but if France should unfortunately obtain the upper hand, she would be mistress of Europe and would impose her law on other States. England could

[1] *Hansard*, cciii. 1051–1056.

[2] The despatches on this question which passed between Lord Granville and Count Bernstorff, the Prussian Ambassador in London, will be found in *Further Correspondence respecting the War between France and Prussia*, No. 3, 1870. See especially the circular despatch of Lord Granville of August 11, 1870.

prevent this by her action now; but later, if France were victorious, she would have to succumb to French dictation like others."'[1]

The same warning came from the Prussian and Belgian Courts.

'The English are more hated at this moment than the French [the Crown Princess wrote from Berlin], and Lord Granville more than Benedetti. Of course *cela a rejailli* on my poor innocent head. . . . I have fought many a battle about Lord Granville, indignant at hearing my old friend so attacked, but all parties agree in making him out *French*. I picked a quarrel about it on the day of the christening, tired and miserable as I was. I sent for Bismarck up into my room on purpose to say my say about Lord Granville, but he would not believe me, and said with a smile, "*But his acts prove it.*" Many other people have told me the same. Lord A. Loftus knows it quite well. Fritz of course does not believe it, but I think the King and Queen do. . . . In the state of fearful excitement here hasty judgments must be excused. All eyes were turned to England for help, as one turns to a friend one loves, and the first positive indication of England's feelings was the unfortunate sale of coals, ammunition, and cartridges. The blow was so severely felt that it will be long before people believe that England means kindly and well by her sister Germany.'[2]

FROM COLONEL PONSONBY TO LORD GRANVILLE.

OSBORNE, *August* 3, 1870.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—The Queen has received letters this day from the King of Prussia and the Crown Princess which, perhaps naturally for them, contain some bitter remarks on the neutral position assumed by Great Britain.

'It is asserted that, had the Government of this country in combination with Russia and Austria insisted on declaring war against the first peace-breaker, the French would not have commenced hostilities, and that now we favour France, especially in the matter of horses and coals, more than Prussia. It is also remarked that you yourself are strongly inclined towards France. The Queen was very indignant at this observation, as her Majesty has considered you have always spoken and acted in the most even fairness to both sides. The Queen has also received a letter from the Duke of Coburg written in a spirit of fairness and moderation, but pointing

[1] Lord Augustus Loftus to Lord Granville, July 18, 1870.

[2] The Crown Princess to the Queen, August 9, 1870.

out at the same time the danger England runs of losing the friendship of Germany, and if France proves victorious and turns upon us, of being without an ally. This, however, is not a very probable contingency, but the Queen would much regret that any misunderstanding should embitter the feelings between us and Germany, and would be glad to know if you think it would be possible to make any public declaration that would convince the German people that our object is to preserve a strict neutrality, and not in any way to favour France, but to treat both nations equally.

'Yours very truly,

'HENRY F. PONSONBY.'

If Germany was complaining, so was France. The Ambassador in London, M. de Lavalette, to whose genial character and conciliatory methods in transacting business Lord Granville took occasion at this time to refer in the House of Lords, regretted that Lord Granville's attitude towards France was unsympathising, and his personal manner 'cold, very cold,' and expressed a wish that some overt sign should at least be given that the ancient alliance between the two countries was not forgotten.[1] Each of the belligerents wished in fact that the neutrality of Great Britain should be a benevolent neutrality. M. de Lavalette himself was probably quite conscious that the extreme reserve of the Foreign Office had been mainly caused by the unjustifiable interpretation so recently placed on the language of Lord Granville by the Duc de Gramont.

The danger of either or both of the belligerents being tempted by the prospect of military advantage or ultimate territorial gain into an attack on the territory of Belgium or of Luxembourg was, however, the pressing peril of the moment, for any infringement of the treaties guaranteeing the existence of those countries might have compelled the very intervention which it was desired above all things to avoid. Suddenly, on the morning of July 25, the *Times* published the text of a draft treaty which it was alleged had been submitted by M. Benedetti to Count Bismarck in 1866. By this document it was proposed that under certain eventualities for which the treaty provided, in case the Emperor of the

[1] *Hansard*, cciii. 1055.

French should be led by circumstances to cause his troops to enter Belgium or to conquer it, the King of Prussia should 'grant armed aid to France,' and support her 'with all his forces, military and naval, in the face of and against every other Power which should in this eventuality declare war.' Count Bismarck, it afterwards appeared, had succeeded in getting possession of the actual document in which the proposal was contained, and had himself communicated it to the *Times*. The explanations of the French Ambassador tendered in the name of his Government were not convincing; but there was no proof that Count Bismarck himself had not been a ready listener to the proposals of M. Benedetti. Which of the two diplomatists had been the principal, and which the accessory, was, however, a matter of comparatively little interest in the face of the clear fact that a conspiracy of some kind had evidently been hatched between them. Both tried to disclaim responsibility, and each tried to throw the blame upon the other. The Queen fully shared the apprehensions of her subjects that each had tried to overreach the other, and that both of the rival diplomatists were equally guilty.[1] Count Bismarck on the 28th issued a circular despatch explaining what had occurred, and attempting to throw the whole blame of the tortuous diplomacy and the aggressive schemes hatched during the past four years on his French rival. The French Government replied officially, and from his camp at Metz the Emperor himself wrote a private letter to the Duc de Gramont, the text of which was communicated to Lord Lyons, and by him to Lord Granville. It ran as follows:—

METZ, *le* 28 *juillet* 1870.

'MON CHER DUC,—En partant ce matin j'ai oublié de vous dire qu'il serait bien important de faire le plus tôt possible une dépêche à La Valette, afin de rejeter sur qui de droit l'initiation et la responsabilité du prétendu traité.

'Voici ce que m'a rappelé mon cousin Napoléon, et ce qui est

[1] The Queen to the King of Prussia, Osborne, August 3, 1870; extract copy among Lord Granville's papers inclosed in Sir Henry Ponsonby's letter to Lord Granville, August 7, 1870. See also *Hansard*, cciii. 925, 1153–1155.

d'accord avec mes souvenirs. M. de Bismarck a dit au prince Napoléon à Berlin : "Vous cherchez une chose impossible. Vous voulez prendre les provinces du Rhin qui sont allemandes, et qui veulent le rester. Pourquoi ne pas vous adjoindre la Belgique, où existe un peuple qui a la même origine et parle la même langue? J'ai déjà fait dire cela à l'Empereur ; s'il entrait dans ces vues, nous l'aiderions à prendre la Belgique. Quant à moi, si j'étais le maître, et que je ne fusse pas gêné par l'entêtement du roi, cela serait déjà fait."

'Ceci est authentique, car Goltz me l'avait déjà dit. Aussi, lorsqu'à l'époque de l'Exposition le roi des Belges parla à Napoléon de ses inquiétudes sur mes intentions, mon cousin lui répondit : "Vous devriez être très reconnaissant à l'Empereur, car Bismarck lui a offert la Belgique et il l'a refusée. En un mot, c'est la Prusse qui a fait l'offre, et c'est nous qui avons éludé de répondre."

'Croyez à ma sincère amitié,

'NAPOLÉON.'[1]

A different view prevailed at Berlin.

'Count Bismarck [the Crown Princess observed in writing to the Queen] may say the wildest things. But he never acts in a foolish way. . . . He behaved very ill to the Emperor when it suited his purpose ; and at other times was so amicable that the Emperor and his friends let out most imprudently all the dark schemes they were meditating for their own purposes. I know a great deal of what came out, and cannot help being shocked at the Emperor, as his intentions towards England were too abominable.'[2]

As each party was trying to throw the responsibility of the draft treaty on the other, both thereby placed themselves in the position of having to show the most extreme eagerness to accept the invitation which Lord Granville at once addressed to them, to join in a treaty which, while maintaining all the guarantees of the Treaty of 1839 in regard to Belgium, gave a new and special guarantee to her territorial integrity. Separate treaties to that effect were accordingly signed on August 9, 1870, between her Majesty on the one side and

[1] Inclosed in Lord Lyons's letter of July 31 to Lord Granville. The whole history of the question is to be found in Benedetti, *Ma Mission en Prusse*, ch. iv., 'Les différents projets de traités qui ont fait l'objet de pourparlers confidentiels à Berlin,' pp. 147–201. The above letter does not add materially to what is there stated.

[2] The Crown Princess of Prussia to the Queen, August 9, 1870.

the King of Prussia and the Emperor of the French on the other, to continue during the war and for twelve months afterwards. At a slightly later date an analogous arrangement was made in regard to Luxembourg. But besides the danger of an attack on either Belgium or Luxembourg, there was another and far greater danger. It was that France might be successful in obtaining the alliance of Austria, where Count Beust had become Chancellor of the Empire and Minister for Foreign Affairs, and was watching his opportunity to retaliate on Count Bismarck for the events of 1866.[1] Count Beust apparently entertained hopes of dragging Italy as well as Austria with him into the struggle. It was foreseen that in that event the strong ties, personal as well as political, which bound the Emperor of Russia to the King of Prussia might bring the former into the field. Europe would then have been plunged into the throes of a contest almost as gigantic as that which had ended in the battle of the nations at Leipzig. The Emperor Napoleon also believed that he would be able to persuade Denmark to join him. The restoration of the Duchy of Schleswig to the Monarchy was held out as an inducement, and it was no unimportant part of the French diplomatic campaign that at the moment when hostilities began, the Duc de Cadore was at Copenhagen on a special mission, with a proposal that an army commanded by General Trochu and supported by a French and Danish fleet should be landed in the Baltic and thence march upon Berlin.

All these schemes were at once paralysed by the news of the German victories of August 6, which rendered the task of Lord Granville in inducing the Powers to maintain a strict neutrality and to act together in the interest of peace a comparatively easy one. There were two things necessary: first, that the Great Powers should agree to take no part in the struggle themselves; and secondly, that none of them should depart from their neutral attitude without a previous

[1] Count Beust became Minister for Foreign Affairs in October 1866. He was made Chancellor of the Empire 1867, a post, as he was fond of reminding his hearers, which had previously been held only by Prince Kaunitz and Prince Metternich.

reciprocal exchange of ideas, and a clear notice to the other Powers of any change of policy with the reasons for that change. The acceptance by the neutral Powers of the proposals to this effect made by Lord Granville has been described by French authors as the formation of a 'Ligue des Neutres :' a league which according to their views, even if devoid of hostile intention, was none the less of hostile effect on French interests; and was also stamped in their opinion by a total disregard on the part of Lord Granville of the true interests of his own country as the rival of Russia in the East of Europe.

It was argued in France that had Lord Granville pursued an opposite policy to that adopted, and had the Queen at his advice placed herself at the head of a militant league—so easy are such combinations upon paper—Denmark, Italy, Austria, and Turkey would, with Great Britain, have forced conditions upon Count Bismarck, and been ready to bring Russia to a standstill in the event of the Czar coming to the rescue of the King of Prussia. According to these calculations not only would France then have been saved, but Great Britain herself would have escaped the humiliation of having subsequently to consent to the abrogation of the clauses of the Treaty of Paris relating to the neutralisation of the Black Sea.[1] If Lord Granville, such was the contention, had imposed an armed mediation on the combatants, and had practically dictated terms of peace to Germany, Great Britain and France could afterwards have joined hands against Russia, and the clauses of the Treaty of 1856 regarding the Black Sea would have been maintained in their integrity. In refusing so to act, Lord Granville, according to these critics, showed an absolute lack of foresight, and missed an obvious opportunity in the month of September 1870. The argument, however, overlooks the main factor of the situation—the determination of Germany to refuse mediation, a determination plainly and openly declared. It also overlooks the fact, frequently forgotten by foreign writers when engaged in making a policy for Great Britain, that, in

[1] Sorel, *Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande*, i. 253.

the famous words of Lord John Russell used in the debate on the case of Don Pacifico, the Foreign Secretary of this country is the Minister not of France, nor of Russia, nor of any other foreign country, but of Great Britain alone, and has to think first and foremost of her interests. The decision which Lord Granville had to take depended on the relative importance which as Foreign Minister he attached to the preservation of peace and to the maintenance of the Black Sea clauses. The former and not the latter was in Lord Granville's opinion the main object. It is certain that no intervention except an armed mediation could have produced any marked result, and an armed mediation would only have extended the area of disturbance. Nor can it even be assumed as a matter beyond doubt that a mediation in favour of France, even if successful, would necessarily have ended in the preservation of the Black Sea clauses, for an armed mediation would have inevitably thrown Germany into the arms of Russia even more completely than before the commencement of the war. It is idle now to speculate whether under any circumstances the clauses of the Black Sea Treaty could long have remained part of the public law of Europe; but what degree of sacrifice it would be wise for Great Britain to make in order to maintain them, if the other Powers would make no effort to do so, was a question which the British Government alone was competent to decide. On the assumption that the clauses were worth an effort to save, it is hardly possible to imagine any method more certain to have immediately led not only to their final loss, but to that also of other and far more valuable provisions of the Treaties of 1856, than to have initiated at this date a gigantic struggle in which Germany, backed by Russia alone, would have been engaged in a hand-to-hand contest with the rest of Europe.

The Empire fell on September 4, and the Paris mob having invaded the Legislative Chamber thereby rendered impossible the construction of a regular Government by the Deputies after the proclamation of the fall of the dynasty. The Government of National Defence, which emerged out of

the confusion, owed their appointment to the acclamations of a vast crowd assembled around the Hôtel de Ville. As first announced, it consisted of all the members of Paris, including M. Thiers, with General Trochu, the military Governor of Paris, as President. M. Jules Favre was Minister for Foreign Affairs. The change of Government in France, it was hoped in London, might render a pacification easier ; and Lord Granville at once exerted himself to secure an interview between M. Jules Favre and Count Bismarck. Mr. Malet, whose father, Sir Alexander Malet, had for many years been Minister to the German Confederation at Frankfurt, and as such a colleague of Count Bismarck, was accordingly sent to the German headquarters in order to try to arrange an interview, and to ascertain what was intended by the victors as to the terms of peace. Meanwhile the Queen appealed to the King of Prussia for moderation in the hour of victory.

THE QUEEN TO THE KING OF PRUSSIA.

'In the name of our friendship and in the interests of humanity, I express the hope that you may be able so to shape your conditions of peace for the vanquished, that they may be able to accept them. Your name will stand yet higher if at the head of your victorious army you now resolve to make peace in a generous spirit.' [1]

'Your Majesty's message is sent,' Lord Granville wrote to the Queen the same day, 'and probably will be opportune,' but he had little real hope of any tangible result. Mr. Malet found Count Bismarck in his most uncompromising humour. After stating that it was 'the intention to hang all persons not in uniform found in arms,' and a sneering reference to the Duc de Gramont, 'allowing him one merit only, that of being a good shot,' he at once made it clear that the fall of the Empire would make no difference, and that he would be unyielding as to the nature of the terms to be demanded of France. Territorial cessions there must be and were to be.

'When you were a little boy [he said to the son of his old friend], you wanted your mother to ask a lady to one of her parties. Your

[1] Telegram, September 21, 1870.

mother refused. On which you threw yourself on the ground, and said you would not rise until you had got what you wanted. In like manner we have thrown ourselves on the soil of France, and will not rise till our terms are agreed to. With regard to these terms we do not ask for Alsace or Lorraine. France may keep them under conditions which would render them useless as a lever in making war upon us, but we insist on Strasburg and Metz. Strasburg must shortly be ours, and we hear that at Metz they are eating their horses, and we believe it will soon fall.'

In reply to further inquiries as to what was exactly meant by this, and asked whether he proposed to take Strasburg and Metz, or merely to raze them, Count Bismarck replied that he proposed to raze them as fortresses, and then to rebuild them 'a good deal stronger than they are now.' He then proceeded to make some remarks on the effect of the Revolution in Paris on the situation. He said Prussia was anxious to make peace, and she would make it with the Provisional Government on the terms which he had mentioned; but if the Provisional Government refused to make peace, Prussia had another string to her bow. It was by no means certain that Marshal Bazaine, who with his army was still besieged in Metz, might not find it suit his purpose under possible circumstances to stand fast by the Emperor. Then, if the Emperor were willing to make peace on the Prussian terms, Prussia would be willing to assist him to regain his throne with the aid of Bazaine's army and of the 140,000 French soldiers now prisoners in Germany. In reply to an inquiry by Mr. Malet, whether the Emperor was in a state of health to be able to undertake such a piece of work, Count Bismarck answered that he never in his life had seen the Emperor in better health, and he attributed it to the bodily exercise and the diet which late events had forced upon him. This statement was obviously a blind, as the Emperor was crushed by malady as well as by misfortune.

At Sédan, the Emperor, Count Bismarck admitted, was unnerved by mental and physical suffering.

'I approached the carriage in which he was. His Majesty took off his cap to salute me It is not customary for us when in uniform

to do more than touch the cap. However, I took mine off, and the Emperor's eyes followed it, until it came on a level with my belt, in which was a revolver, when he turned quite pale. I cannot account for it. He could not, I suppose, think I was going to use it, but the fact of his changing colour was quite unmistakable. I was surprised that he should have sent for me ; I should have thought I was the last person that he would wish to receive him, because he has betrayed me. All that has passed between us made me confident that he would not go to war with Germany. He was bound not to do so, and his doing so was an act of personal treachery to me.'[1]

Towards the end of the interview Count Bismarck introduced the subject of the draft treaty. He said the secret should have died with him, had France had a tolerable pretext for going to war, but that he considered her 'outrageous conduct' on this occasion released him from all obligation. 'If,' he remarked, 'a man asks the hand of my daughter in marriage and I refuse it, I should consider it a matter of honour to keep the proposal a secret according as he behaved well to me ; but if he attacked me, I should be no longer bound. This is quite a different question from that of publishing a secret proposition at the same time that you refuse it. You must be a Beust or an Austrian,' Count Bismarck bitterly observed, 'to do that;' and Lord Granville himself once admitted that Beust's activity and power of seeing into millstones was quite wonderful.[2]

The King of Prussia was as unyielding as his minister.

'I thank you most cordially for the telegrams forwarded through Count Bernstorff from Balmoral [he had already replied to the Queen]. You know that I do not wage war for glory and conquest ; and I shall gladly be as generous as my duties towards my own people permit. You have the sentiment of patriotic duties towards England in as large a measure as I towards Germany. That sentiment will tell you that in shaping the terms of peace, I must place in the first line the protection of Germany against the next attack of France, which no generosity will stop.'[3]

Meanwhile the captive Emperor of the French was at Wilhelmshöhe.

[1] Mr. Malet to Lord Lyons, September 16, 17, 1870.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Odo Russell, November 20, 1872.
[3] September 22, 1870, copy among Lord Granville's papers.

LORD COWLEY TO LORD GRANVILLE.

20 ALBEMARLE STREET, W., *September* 21, 1870.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—You will probably have seen in the papers that Lady Cowley has been to see the Emperor, and you may like to know what passed on the occasion. Of course there is no truth in the report that she went with a message from the Empress; the truth being that, finding herself at Frankfurt, she did not like to go on without going to see him. He was delighted to see her, but quite overcome at first. He gave her an account of all his proceedings—how he had been deceived both in regard to the preparations for war, and more especially with respect to public opinion. He said that on leaving St. Cloud for the army he had believed that he had never been more popular, that the ovation prepared for his departure was such that it would have taken him hours to go through Paris had he attempted it. He described the total demoralisation of the troops on meeting with their first check; how he was pressed to give up the command, and his desire to have retired upon Paris with the army of Châlons, when he thought he might have saved the dynasty, but he was overruled by the Regency. When he came to describe the battle of Sedan his feelings gave way completely. The scenes he went through were, he said, quite harrowing. He speaks in the most grateful terms of the King of Prussia, whom he describes as much more *ému* than himself at their famous interview. Everything was done to spare his feelings. It is not true that he was *purposely* taken through the Prussian troops. He wished to avoid seeing his own troops prisoners. His admiration of the Prussian system &c. is boundless. He drove through *miles* of them on his way from Sedan, and he describes them to have looked as if upon parade. Lady Cowley says that he looks ill, and he suffers from the cold of Wilhelmshöhe. He can hold no communication with anyone except by permission, and all letters pass through the Prussian authorities there. The suite told Lady Cowley that he cannot stir beyond the grounds, as he is at once exposed to insult, and it seems that his journey through Germany was most disagreeable, as he was hooted and jeered at wherever he stopped. Lady Cowley thinks that he has not abandoned all hope of being reinstated. The suite are less sanguine, but hope that the dynasty may be preserved.

'These details may perhaps interest you, but do not think it necessary to answer my letter.

'I should add that the few French soldiers whom Lady Cowley

met with on the road are loud in their execrations of their late master.

'Sincerely yours,

'COWLEY.'

A change of opinion was beginning to manifest itself in England. Public opinion at the outset of the war had been profoundly hostile to France, universally considered to be the true aggressor. The publication of the draft treaty, the whole blame of which was unjustly thrown on the Emperor personally and alone, had accentuated the feeling. The circumstances connected with the publication of the Ems telegram were still unknown. But when the Empire fell, public opinion believed that, the author and cause of the war being gone, peace ought to be made on reasonable terms; and when it began to be whispered that the terms which were likely to be demanded by the victors were frightful in their severity, a revulsion took place. Sympathy began to transfer itself to the defenders of beleaguered Paris, and to the hasty levies which were gathering behind the Loire near Orleans. The change of feeling extended to official circles. The Empire in its last days had been rapidly exhausting the patience of the friends which it still had; and whatever the future might have in store as to the permanent Government of France, it was believed that it would be more reliable in many ways than the Imperial régime. The suggestions of Count Bismarck for an Imperial restoration accordingly met with no favour.

'In regard to the Prussian idea of Napoleon as Emperor [Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville], I cannot help thinking that we cannot with propriety receive the communication of that idea, considering the consequences it draws, without recording our objections to it.'[1]

Lord Granville shared these feelings, believing that, uncertain as the future might be, Great Britain was more likely to find in the Republic a reliable political ally than in a Government restored and protected by foreign forces. To bring about an armistice and to facilitate the constitution

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, September 16, 1870.

of a regular Government in France, were the objects at which he accordingly aimed after September 4.

Among the immediate results of the war was the arrival in England of one illustrious fugitive after another, each bringing some personal problem which further complicated the political situation. First arrived the Prince Imperial, and then the Empress of the French. Her flight was thus described by Sir John Burgoyne :—

SIR JOHN BURGOYNE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

GAZELLE, R.Y.S., OFF RYDE,
*September* 8, 1870.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Although I have not the honour of your Lordship's acquaintance, I think it my duty to write a private letter to inform you of a circumstance that has occurred of a somewhat extraordinary nature, which I trust you will do me the favour to keep for the present entirely secret. I had been lying in my yacht for several days in Trouville Harbour, when on the 6th inst. two strange gentlemen came on board ostensibly to see an English yacht. When on board they suddenly asked me to take on board immediately the Empress of the French and one lady, as she was in immediate danger of arrest, and this was her only hope of escape. They informed me that she had travelled by road since Sunday, had not changed her clothes, and was in great distress. Although my yacht is but forty-two tons, the urgency of the matter induced me to agree, and at midnight I met by appointment two ladies closely veiled, one of whom introduced herself to me as the Empress. I took her on board the yacht, and the only remark she made was, "I know I am safe now under the protection of an Englishman." She said, "Pauvre France," and became very hysterical for a time. Lady Burgoyne endeavoured to make the Empress as comfortable as possible, and as, notwithstanding it was blowing a strong head wind with very heavy sea, it was so necessary that I should leave France, I went out of harbour and happily crossed the Channel, and landed the Empress safely this morning at 6 A.M. The Empress is so anxious that this should be kept an entire secret, that no one except Lady Burgoyne and myself know it, and I trust to your Lordship's good feeling to help me to keep it secret. I hope you will not think I have acted wrongly in the matter, as my sole object was to help a lady in distress, and my wish is now that the story may not become known.

'I am yours faithfully,

'J. MONTAGU BURGOYNE.'

'Her misfortune is great, although it is much owing to herself: Mexico, Rome, war with Prussia.'[1] In these few words Lord Granville summed up the mixed feelings which in the Empress pitied misfortune and admired undaunted courage, but could not entirely forget political responsibility. The Empress took up her residence at Chislehurst. The situation thus created was one of extreme delicacy. The respect due to fallen greatness, especially on the part of those who had enjoyed the hospitality of the Empire in the time of prosperity, beckoned one way. The absolute necessity that the Foreign Minister should carefully abstain from appearing to be too much *en rapport* with the little Court of the exiled monarch pointed in an opposite direction, for Count Bismarck was still feeling his way in regard to a projected restoration of the Imperial Family under German protection. The idea was bitterly resented by public opinion in England, and every indication of it was jealously scrutinised on both sides of the Channel.

LORD GRANVILLE TO SIR JOHN BURGOYNE.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September* 9, 1870.

'DEAR SIR JOHN,—I am much obliged to you for the interesting information you have given me, and I congratulate you on the opportunity you have had of being of service to the illustrious lady. I presume you have no doubt of the identity of her Imperial Majesty. If you still see her Majesty, pray tell her that the Duchesse de Mouchy and M. de Lavalette both thought the Prince Imperial looking well. Add how much honoured I should be if I could be of any possible use to her Majesty, and what a deep recollection I have of her Majesty's kindness. 'Yours truly,

'GRANVILLE.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUCHESSE DE MOUCHY.

WALMER CASTLE, *October* 22, 1870.

'MY DEAR MADAME DE MOUCHY,—Gladstone expressed yesterday his regrets to me that partly from his absence from London, and partly from the slight personal acquaintance he has the honour of having

[1] Lord Granville to Sir Henry Ponsonby, September 17, 1870.

with the Empress of the French, he had not had any opportunity of paying any mark of respect to her Imperial Majesty.

'I told him that I had taken the opportunity of a despatch concerning the Emperor to write to her Majesty, and had received a most gracious answer, and that I believed the Empress was quite aware through you that personally I was completely at her Majesty's orders.

'That I had told the Duke of Cambridge and Prince Arthur that, although her Majesty declined all general visits, I was sure that it would not be disagreeable to her to receive members of the Royal Family.

'That I had not asked for an audience, because it was possible that, if granted to an official person, it might at this particular moment be misconstrued both as regards the Empress and the Minister.

'Pray tell me your opinion of my conversation.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Another illustrious fugitive quickly followed on the steps of the Empress. When the Government of National Defence was formed, M. Thiers—though one of the members for Paris—had declined to join it, alleging that it lacked a legal mandate, and that he could also serve his country more effectually by undertaking a mission abroad. *Ce n'est pas une mission ; c'est une absence*, was the epigram which Parisian wit could not be prevented coining, even in the midst of the terrors of the Prussian advance on the capital, on a proceeding in which some thought they recognised that the veteran statesman had not forgotten the description of those men of old whose figures the historian described as 'conspicuous precisely because unseen.'[1]

On September 13, 1870, M. Thiers arrived in London, and Lord Granville called on him on the same day as a mark of respect. M. Thiers immediately proceeded to give an interesting sketch of recent events. He said that neither France nor Paris nor the Chamber were in favour of war, that the Empress pressed it, that the Emperor decided it, but in the vacillating manner peculiar to his character; that the generals promoted it in the hope of

[1] Tacitus, *Annals*, iii. 76: 'Prefulgebant eo ipso quod effigies eorum non visebantur.'

becoming marshals, and the marshals because they desired to be dukes and princes. The Bonapartists, more violent than the Imperial dynasty, pressed it because they thought that the Emperor's and consequently their influence would be increased by a victorious campaign. He had laboured hard to persuade the Emperor that France was not prepared for war. He had succeeded in persuading the Ministry, all but Marshal Lebœuf, and he had requested to be confronted with the latter, whose statements he engaged to disprove, figures in hand, within three-quarters of an hour. He described how nearly peace had been secured, and how M. Ollivier had been intimidated by the violence of the Bonapartists. The defeat of the French arms he attributed to the character of the commanders, the deficiency in numbers, and especially to the inferiority of the artillery. He regretted the sweeping away of the Imperial dynasty at the moment. He thought General Palikao's attempt to establish a Regency injudicious, and he explained the confusion through which it had happened that the present Government had not been regularly constituted by the Chamber. He was of opinion that no Government but the present *de facto* Government was possible. He was an Orleanist, but he thought an Orleans Prince at such a time almost impossible. The Comte de Chambord and a Bonaparte were both equally out of the question. A Republic represented everybody at a moment of crisis.

If a Government was to be composed of Republicans, he went on to say, the present Ministry was better than any other. With exceptions which were not important, the Ministers, although of advanced opinions, were men of respectability and character. Trochu was a hero and a man of great sense; Favre rich, of high character, a good speaker, and also an acute and able man. It was their desire to conclude an honourable peace, and for this purpose, at great inconvenience and with reluctance, but pressed not only by the Government, but by all his Conservative and Liberal friends, he had undertaken to come first to this country and then to go to St. Petersburg and Vienna.

'He asked for no forcible intervention, but he appealed to England to exert her moral influence to obtain peace. It could not be for the interest of this country to abdicate her position as a great Power. Although an island and a maritime Power, she belonged to Europe. In former times she had shown the interest she took in the balance of power. She had shown the world what colonies and sailors she could send out. She could not wish to see France—who for forty years had been her ally, who had fought by her side in the Crimea, who in times such as the Indian Mutiny had taken no advantage of her difficulties—humiliated and weakened. It was not for the interest of England that a dishonourable peace should be patched up which would leave France weak and irritable, unable to assist Great Britain, but ready for every occasion to recover her lost prestige. If England would only take the lead, all neutral nations would follow, and it would be impossible for Prussia to withstand the moral force of public opinion in favour of humanity and the balance of European power.'

Thus spake the old man eloquent. Lord Granville was about to give his views in answer, when he saw that M. Thiers had sunk back with his eyes closed, and leaning over the chair he could perceive no signs of breathing. Convinced that M. Thiers had died under the excitement and exhaustion of such an undertaking at his age, he got up to call for help, but feeling how awkward this might be supposing that after all M. Thiers was only asleep, he hesitated, and finally solved the question by poking the fire and knocking down the fire-irons with a great clang. M. Thiers woke up quite quietly, and at once continued the conversation with great alacrity as if nothing had happened. Lord Granville then shortly recounted to him

'what had been our course. We had done all in our power to obtain peace; we went beyond what we had a right to do in urging Spain to abandon a candidate whom she had a right fully to choose. We succeeded in removing the ground of quarrel. But the French Government had not been satisfied, had left us on one side and hastened to declare hostilities. We declared to Parliament (and our declaration was approved) that we intended to maintain a strict neutrality, and to endeavour to keep up friendly relations with both countries. From the first, we told all who pressed us that it was not our intention to offer ourselves as

mediators, unless we had reason to believe that mediation would be acceptable to both parties, and that there seemed to be a basis on which both belligerents would agree to negotiate; but that by all we could learn such a state of things had not arisen.'[1]

Some conversation as to the advantage of M. Favre going to the Prussian headquarters then ensued. Lord Granville thought it would be of use, and M. Thiers was of opinion that M. Favre would not refuse to go.

Much at this juncture depended on the character and abilities of the French Minister for Foreign Affairs.

'This Provisional Government [Lord Lyons wrote from Paris], though the most regular and moderate I have ever heard of, is sometimes a little sudden in its movements. . . . Favre, who has brilliant abilities, appears to be an excellent man, but is not accustomed to a Corps Diplomatique, and tells a bit to one and a bit to another, instead of making up his story in his mind and telling it to all alike.'

Further experience only confirmed the view that M. Favre was 'an honest and really patriotic man,' by which, Lord Lyons said, was meant 'a man who will sacrifice his own position and interests to what he believes to be the real good of his country;' but he did not show himself to be 'a good diplomatist or a skilful negotiator, and was too much led away by his feelings to be a man of business.'[2] He was at the moment engaged on a circular in which he announced that France would not cede 'a stone of her fortresses or an inch of her territory'—a sentiment magnificent indeed, but scarcely practical under existing circumstances.[2]

In another conversation with Lord Granville two days subsequently to that already narrated, M. Thiers observed that, in order to make M. Favre's journey to the Prussian headquarters useful, it would be necessary that his appearance there should be accompanied by a message conveying the strong moral support of the British Government, which should urge the visit upon the ground of humanity and of the maintenance of the balance of power in Europe; and he repeated the arguments why Great Britain should not

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, September 13, 1870.
[2] Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, September 12, December 26, 1870.

remain quiescent. Lord Granville replied that these arguments were not new to him, as they had been all urged upon him by the Germans, who also pressed the view that it was contrary to British interest and dignity to take no part, 'when the French had begun an unjustifiable and aggressive war against our advice, in despite of our successful efforts to remove the cause of quarrel.'

M. Thiers thought that at the outset of the war the Prussians had some ground for what they then said, but there was now a change. The Government which had desired war was no longer in existence; those now at the head of affairs had always required peace, and this was the moment for England to show her sense of the importance of her long alliance with France, and to assert her own place in the councils of Europe. To these arguments, which M. Thiers pressed with great vehemence and ability, Lord Granville replied that—

'we must judge what was best for ourselves; that if we changed our policy it must be either for one of threatening neutrality, to which we were not disposed and which M. Thiers did not ask; or for an offer of mediation or of good offices. "We objected to that for the reasons which I had given yesterday, and I added that I believed it would be much easier for the King and Count Bismarck to agree to conditions which the army and Germany might not consider to be ample, if the concession was made spontaneously and not upon the advice of a neutral, who had taken no part in the difficulties of the war. I could therefore only accompany the message, if the French Government wished me to send it, with words as to the satisfaction which I felt in doing that which would afford the best means of making each party acquainted with one another's demands, and the best chance of arriving at an honourable peace."'

M. Thiers then suggested the immediate recognition of the Republic. Lord Granville replied that

'It would be contrary to precedent to do so at present; that he wished to be on the most friendly relations with the Government, and that the best proof of this was the present conversation; but the Government of National Defence had had no legal sanction; it called itself a Government only for a special object, and had announced the summoning of a Constituent Assembly, which would decide on the future Government of France. He believed her

Majesty's Government would advise the Queen to acknowledge the Government as soon as the nation had formally recognised it, but till then every practical end in a time of crisis would be obtained by the maintenance of the existing good relations.'

In a further conversation on the 16th M. Thiers returned to the attack. In a final appeal and with all his eloquence he commented on the apathy shown by Great Britain. He dwelt upon the loss to her dignity, and upon the danger to her and to all Europe of the immense preponderance of Germany: more immediately to Austria, which must lose her German provinces; for there was nothing that North Germany, with a population of 60,000,000, could not do, acting as a machine and led by such a man as Count Bismarck. Lord Granville replied that he could not discuss this matter any further; that M. Thiers' arguments went beyond his demands, and were in favour of armed intervention. On that point, however, there could be no doubt as to public opinion in England. But, he said, M. Thiers ought not to be discontented with the result of his visit. He could hardly have hoped, even with all his ability, to change the course of policy which the Government had deliberately adopted. But his second object, that of explaining the necessity at this moment of the present form of government in France, and the merits of M. Favre, General Trochu, and the other leading members, had had much effect upon those with whom he had conversed. They had now arranged a meeting between M. Favre and Count Bismarck, which could hardly fail to be of use.

The final refusal of Lord Granville to discuss intervention made the position at one moment become strained. There was 'a moment of vivacity:' M. Thiers the diplomatist could also be M. Thiers the orator; but he was always a man of the world, and before leaving he deftly removed any disagreeable impression which the warmth of his passionate argument might have created, by a neat compliment, which it was pleasant for him to make and for Lord Granville to hear. He adverted to the time when, a comparatively young man, he had transacted business in Paris with Lord Granville's father, the Ambassador. He himself, he said, had been

brought up in the school of M. de Talleyrand, but he had always considered the Ambassador as the *beau idéal* of a diplomatist—a proud Englishman, able, gentle, straightforward, and honest—proud, indeed, as he had found when once he had 'a movement of vivacity with him.' Thus ended these remarkable interviews.[1]

But stranger things were to follow than even M. Thiers' mission. The Empress had not been many days in England, when Lord Granville unexpectedly found himself the recipient of a letter from a celebrated general belonging to the Army of the Rhine, then still besieged inside Metz; but the letter was dated, not from inside that fortress, but from Chislehurst. It appeared from the information received from the Duchesse de Mouchy, who accompanied the Empress, that about September 21 a M. Regnier had appeared at Hastings, and sought an interview with the Empress, but did not obtain it. He then forced himself on some of the suite, telling them that the Empress was not in her right place, that she ought not to be absent from her post, she should be on a vessel of war, &c. &c. He afterwards met the Prince Imperial with his tutor, a young man of twenty-five. He told the Prince that he was about to go to Wilhelmshöhe; and he asked whether his Imperial Highness had no message for his father, whether he would not send him his photograph. The tutor advised him to give it with a photograph of Hastings, upon which the Prince wrote to this effect: 'My dear father, you will certainly be glad to have a photograph of the place in which I am staying from the hands of a person who has seen me.' The Empress only heard of this two days later. She was much distressed, and telegraphed to the Emperor: 'A man may come to you with a photograph of Louis. Do not believe anything he says. I know nothing of him.'

M. Regnier had meanwhile presented himself at Metz, with a Prussian safe-conduct which he succeeded in obtaining from Count Bismarck. He showed Marshal Bazaine the photograph, and said he came by the Empress's

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, September 14, 16, 1870.

orders to ask for either Maréchal Canrobert or General Bourbaki—that peace was about to be signed, but as the Prussians could not sign with the Republic, the Empress required a representative of the army to be with her when she signed the peace. Marshal Bazaine gave General Bourbaki the order to go. General Bourbaki then went with M. Regnier, who introduced him to a Prussian colonel. The colonel said he had been waiting twenty-four hours for him, and proposed to him to see Prince Frederick Charles, but General Bourbaki said he had nothing to say to him and declined. M. Regnier said he would follow to England with the treaty of peace ready to be signed. General Bourbaki was accompanied to the frontier by a Prussian officer of high rank, who on taking leave said, 'General, I know who you are, and am glad to have been in the society of so distinguished a soldier.'

On arriving in England, General Bourbaki quickly discovered the trick which had been played upon him. 'The Empress and the General,' said the Duchesse de Mouchy, 'both consider that they have been dishonoured. The Empress has only one thought—that for France, and would do anything, even for the Republic, which would save the country.'[1] She now wished to save the honour of the General, and they both inquired whether Lord Granville could assist in devising means for the General to return to Metz. Lord Granville said he could give no advice or answer without reflection.

The letter from General Bourbaki which Lord Granville had received ran as follows :—

General Bourbaki to Lord Granville.

Chislehurst, *le* 29 *sept.* 1870.

'Monsieur le Comte,—Je viens solliciter le concours de V.E. dans une circonstance qui intéresse profondément mon honneur militaire.

'Un monsieur qui se dit Français, prenant le nom de Regnier, et

[1] Memorandum of a conversation between Lord Granville and the Duchesse de Mouchy, September 28, 1870.

porteur d'un laisser-passer pour deux ou trois personnes signé de M. le comte de Bismarck, s'est présenté le 23 sept. à M. le maréchal Bazaine, commandant-en-chef de l'armée du Rhin. Il a excipé d'instructions verbales émanées de S.M. l'Impératrice.

'Ces instructions auraient eu pour objet l'envoi immédiat auprès d'elle du maréchal Canrobert ou de moi.

'M. Regnier déclarait d'ailleurs que le gouvernement Prussien ne ferait aucune objection au départ de l'un de nous et en donnait pour preuve le laisser-passer dont il était porteur.

'Le maréchal commandant-en-chef a ajouté foi à cette déclaration et m'a donné l'ordre de partir, le maréchal Canrobert étant souffrant.

'Nous avons trouvé aux avant-postes un colonel de l'armée Prussienne qui nous attendait depuis la veille. Toutes facilités m'ont été données pour me rendre en Belgique, et je suis arrivé hier à Londres.

'Dès les premières paroles échangées avec Sa Majesté, il a été évident que nous étions victimes d'actes et de faits qui restent inexplicables. S.M. n'avait donné ni directement ni indirectement, ni par écrit ni verbalement aucun ordre, aucune instruction à qui ce fût pour le maréchal Bazaine. Mon devoir militaire m'ordonne de revenir auprès de mes soldats et de partager leur sort.

'Je supplie donc V.E. de s'intéresser en mon nom près de S.M. le roi de Prusse. Je demande un laisser-passer qui me permettra d'aller reprendre mon poste.

'Le roi comprendra, j'en suis sûr, le sentiment d'honneur qui inspire ma demande et ne voudra pas exposer la conduite d'un loyal soldat à de cruelles et injustes interprétations.

'J'attends, avec une impatience que dans votre bienveillance vous trouverez certainement légitime, et votre réponse et celle que vous recevrez de S.M. le roi de Prusse.

'Agréez, M. le comte, l'hommage de mon profond respect.

'Le général de division A.-D.-C. de l'Empereur, commandant la garde impériale. 'Signé C. BOURBAKI.'

On the 30th Lord Granville had a further conversation with the Duchesse de Mouchy.

MEMORANDUM OF CONVERSATION BETWEEN LORD GRANVILLE AND THE DUCHESSE DE MOUCHY.

*September* 30, 1870.

'I called again this evening on the Duchesse de Mouchy, at her request.

'She told me that the Empress regretted that the Duchesse had told me that the previous communication was of a confidential character. The Empress wishes it to be known.

'Madame de Mouchy read me a letter of instructions for the Empress left by M. Regnier with the tutor. The Empress was to get back to France on a ship of war. Her Majesty was to issue proclamations to the army, navy, prefects, and other authorities. She was to communicate with the Foreign Office and with the Austrian and Italian Ambassadors. She was to describe her visit to England as prompted only by the wish of a mother to embrace her son. She was to act as a *de facto* Government—that hers was one *de jure* no one could doubt, &c. &c.

'Madame de Mouchy also read a long account by General Bourbaki—carriages, compartments in railway trains, and even a Government special train retained for him. Suspicions were first aroused on his learning from the Belgian newspapers the real state of things. M. Regnier on parting from him said that the General had better take M. Regnier's passport with him. In this he found the report of a conversation with Count Bismarck on the importance of re-establishing the Imperial Government, and the mode of doing so, and the instructions which accompanied M. Bismarck's safe-conduct to Metz. The Duchesse de Mouchy described M. Regnier as speaking to the household perfect French, without any accent, but not like a Frenchman.

'In answer to a request, I repeated my inability to give any advice.'

M. Regnier, who by this time had arrived in England, but without the promised draft treaty of peace, one day succeeded in forcing himself on Lord Granville at Walmer, but by that time his game was up. 'He makes the impression of being a swindler,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Lyons, 'but seems to have honestly wished to serve the Empress Eugénie in bringing Bourbaki to her.'[1] With this observation the hero of this strange mystification, in which the General was the dupe, may be allowed to disappear from the scene. It was eventually arranged that General Bourbaki should return to France, where he played a prominent part in the

[1] M. Regnier's name reappeared long after these events in connection with the celebrated mystification known as the Humbert frauds in 1902–3. He published his own account of the transactions referred to above in a pamphlet, *Quel est votre Nom?* (Brussels, 1870).

last stages of the war as Commander-in-Chief of the Army of the East.

The interviews between Count Bismarck and M. Favre which took place on September 19 and 20 at Haute Maison and Ferrières near Lagny, proved abortive, as neither would yield anything on the vital question of the cession of territory as one of the conditions of peace, and it was found impossible even to arrange the terms of an armistice. When also M. Thiers himself, on his return from England, negotiated with Count Bismarck, he quickly discovered that since the interview with Mr. Malet, Count Bismarck had considerably raised his terms.

On September 27 a despatch was issued from Berlin by Herr von Thile, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, who had replaced Count Bismarck in his absence at the seat of war. It threw on the Government of National Defence the whole blame of the failure of the negotiations for an armistice. This was followed by the issue of a despatch from Count Bismarck himself on October 2, in which any intention of reducing France to the position of a second-rate Power was disclaimed. Mr. Gladstone now thought he saw a proper opportunity for the British Foreign Office to express officially in reply their dislike to any cession of territory against the wish of the inhabitants, and in this view he was supported by Mr. Goschen. The hard fate of Strasbourg, which with its commerce and university had become a centre of French life and intellect, was the object of special sympathy in England. 'Quite exhausted,' Lord Granville writes on September 30, 'after the longest fight I ever had against Gladstone. The losses were great; the killed and wounded innumerable; but I remained in possession of the field and the Cabinet. He wanted to declare our views on the conditions of peace; I was against doing so.'[1] Lord Granville considered that any expressions of the kind, unless it was intended to support them by material action, could only do harm, and might possibly drive Count Bismarck into accepting the most extreme demands of the military party.

[1] Lord Granville to Lady Granville, September 30, 1870.

'On the particular point of difference between you and me [he wrote to Mr. Gladstone] we cannot be biassed by any prejudice, as, while our political feelings are for neutrality, I am personally better inclined to the French than you are. My objection to doing at present what you propose is that it is impossible according to my views to do so, without being considered to throw our weight into the French scale against Germany, with consequent encouragement on one side and on the other. Palmerston wasted the strength derived by England from the great war by his brag. I am afraid of our wasting that which we at present derive from moral causes, by laying down general principles when nobody will attend to them, and when in all probability they will be disregarded. We have reserved our full liberty of action, and can protest whenever we like. But there are symptoms of both sides wearying of the war; they may come to us at last, and it is not at all clear that we may not be glad to arrange a peace which would have to include a cession of some thousands of "intellectual Strasburgians" and the inhabitants of a narrow strategical line, without much reference to their wishes.'[1]

To Mr. Goschen, Lord Granville explained his views in the following letter:

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GOSCHEN.

WALMER CASTLE, *October* 5, 1870.

'MY DEAR GOSCHEN,—A thousand thanks for your letter, which states the argument in favour of Gladstone's proposal with great force.

'To say the truth, your reasons do not seem to me to tell much against the line we have adopted, while I retain the strongest opinion against laying down a general principle at an inopportune moment which can have only one practical meaning, viz. that, although we cannot prevent it, the Prussians are not to take away any territory from the French. For even if Alsace and Lorraine get ultimately to like being Germans, no one can believe that at this moment they would give a perfectly free vote in that sense.

'The time may come when we may use this bit of buncombe with effect, and possibly help Bismarck by doing so. It is the only ground of which I am aware upon which we can make a stand against France being utterly humiliated, but at present firing this shot in the air would only complete the anger of the Germans and encourage the French to hold out.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 7, 1870.

'As far as sound English feeling goes, I believe it is entirely in favour of neutrality, and any one-sided and unnecessary declaration would lay us open to more blame than praise. Much as we must strive to keep our party with us, the primary object must be to serve the national interest in this crisis. The Chancellor is with me so far as he can be, not having heard Gladstone's arguments. I cannot say how sorry I am at this first difference with Gladstone: his kindness and his assistance have been unlimited. He sometimes forgets in talking with diplomats that they record every word he says, but his knowledge and his large views are admirable. 'Yours, G.'

The exact relative position and rights of the Prime Minister and the Foreign Secretary had been the cause of the great crisis of 1851. The same question—which the concluding paragraph of the letter just quoted to Mr. Goschen touches upon—made Lord Granville at this time address a friendly remonstrance to Mr. Gladstone on what he thought were his occasionally compromising conversations with Foreign Ambassadors, in which Lord Granville possibly noticed some similarity to the discursiveness which Lord Lyons had observed in the great orator who was Foreign Minister at the moment in France.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, *October* 29, 1870.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Your letter to Hammond seems a very good one, but I should be glad if you would keep it back till we have settled our Turkish policy in the Cabinet.

'May I venture to make you a request, which does not come from any jealous feeling, although possibly from one of conscious weakness?

'I imagine that the Prime Minister has an undoubted right to communicate directly either with our representatives abroad or with Foreign Ministers in London. But I think it is in his interest as much as in that of the Foreign Secretary that he should only appear as the *deus ex machinâ*.

'Both English and foreign diplomatists like the double communication, particularly when the Prime Minister is not only officially superior, but personally immensely so. Bernstorff once boasted to me that he liked going to you—"I like having the two strings to my bow." They like checking what is said by one, by what is said by

the other, and drawing inferences accordingly. They find you overflowing with original and large ideas, every one of which is invaluable for a despatch. They find very few ideas in my conversation, and those of a negative character.

'On the other hand, you are perfectly unreserved with me, and I am, although not a powerful, a truthful exponent of your views.

'After reading all this you will say, "What have I done?" and I should have nothing to answer; but I am glad to say what occurs to me on a matter likely to arise from your great zest for all public affairs, and from the interest and pleasure which Dips. would derive from such communications. 'Yours, G.'

Mr. Gladstone clung obstinately to the hope that moderate counsels might yet prevail. But whatever hopes might once have been legitimately entertained on the subject were now over. M. Thiers had again visited the Prussian headquarters. His opinion, Lord Lyons wrote, was that there was a political party and a military party, each clearly defined. The political party, with which Count Bismarck himself in great measure agreed, was desirous of bringing the war to an end by concluding peace on comparatively moderate terms. The military party held that the glory of the Prussian arms and the future security of Germany demanded that the rights of war should be pushed to the uttermost, and that France should be laid waste, ruined, and humiliated to such a degree, as to render it impossible for her to wage war again with Germany for very many years. M. Thiers could not, however, discover, even among the most moderate of the so-called political party, anyone who seemed to ask less than the cession of Alsace and of that part of Lorraine in which German is spoken. M. Thiers believed Count Bismarck to have been sincere at the commencement of the negotiations in his comparative moderation, but to have been overruled by the military party at the end. Certainly he had gone so far as to ask M. Thiers to draw up first a written paper laying down the bases of the proposed armistice, and secondly a draft of the articles to be signed, and had entered in some detail into the question of the amount of provisions to be supplied to Paris. M. Thiers thought that the disturbances in Paris might have given strength to the opposition

of the military party to the armistice, and that Count Bismarck might himself have become less earnest when he found that there was no hope of procuring any immediate concession from M. Favre respecting the integrity of the territory.[1]

M. Thiers appeared generally to agree with the Government in Paris that the neutral Powers should press Prussia to grant an armistice on reasonable terms, in order that the convocation of a National Assembly might give her a recognised Government with which to treat. Count Bismarck, he said, affected to treat this argument as of little value, and declared that so far from not having a Government with whom to treat, he had two—one at Paris and one at Wilhelmshöhe. 'Cowley has called here,' Lord Granville notes on October 23; 'he has been consulted by the Empress, who is in a dreadful state of mind. Bismarck will let the troops out of Metz if she will promise to sign any terms for peace he chooses.'[2] Count Bismarck none the less spoke to M. Thiers with the most unmitigated dislike of the Emperor Napoleon III., but was perfectly willing to make use of him to attain his own ends in France. In reality, however, M. Thiers thought Count Bismarck very much embarrassed by the absence of a regular Government, and was anxious to promote the election of a National Assembly. At the opening of the negotiations, M. Thiers pointedly stated that the armistice had been proposed to both parties by the four great neutral Powers, but Count Bismarck, both then and whenever M. Thiers mentioned the neutral Powers, manifested impatience and annoyance, and of Great Britain he spoke with special ill-humour.[3] The Crown Prince also complained to Colonel Walker, the British military attaché at the Prussian headquarters, of the hostility of England, and said that it would oblige Prussia to contract an alliance with the United States. 'It all looks,' Lord

[1] On October 31 the mob of Paris captured the Hôtel de Ville, and held the Government of National Defence prisoners for several hours.

[2] Lord Granville to Lady Granville, October 23, 1870.

[3] Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, November 10, 1870.

Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'much as if Bismarck wished to pick a quarrel with us. He has always hated the English, and at all events no confidence can be placed in him.'[1] One thing was at least evident, that any offer of British mediation would not be accepted, and that any definite expression of disapproval of the transfer of French territory would probably only produce an effect opposite to that intended.

At this moment the controversy between Lord Granville and Count Bernstorff as to the alleged breach of neutrality by Great Britain in not prohibiting the export of arms, coals, and ammunition, was again becoming acute; while a fresh matter of dispute was added by the action of some German troops, which, reviving the old doctrines of international law in regard to the so-called *jus angariæ*, had seized some British colliers and their cargoes in the Seine near Duclerc, and had scuttled them.[2]

In the early days of September, Count Bernstorff renewed his complaints at the Foreign Office that British business firms had been supplying coals and arms to France; and in an elaborate argument he developed some new and hitherto unheard-of doctrines of international law, in which it was claimed that Great Britain ought to have displayed what was therein termed 'benevolent neutrality' towards Prussia and the other German belligerents. Lord Granville had no difficulty in showing that this implied, if the words meant anything, that Great Britain, while remaining neutral, should be more favourable to one belligerent, viz. Prussia and her allies, and therefore by implication less favourable to France: in other words, that Great Britain was invited to commit a practical breach of neutrality; the essence of neutrality being that the neutral shall not favour either belligerent and shall treat both equally. 'It seems hardly to admit of doubt,' Lord Granville's reply pointed out, 'that neutrality, when it once departs from strict impartiality, runs

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 15, 1870.

[2] See Hall, *International Law*, edition 1880, p. 353. The British shipowners were afterwards compensated.

the risk of altering its essence, and that the moment a neutral allows his proceedings to be biassed by predilection for one of the two belligerents, he ceases to be a neutral. The idea, therefore, of a benevolent neutrality can mean little less than the extinction of neutrality.'

LORD WESTBURY TO LORD GRANVILLE.

HINTON ST. GEORGE, TAUNTON, *September* 19.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I cannot refrain from writing a few lines to express the pleasure with which I have read your correspondence with Count Bernstorff.

'Your exposition of the law, both international and municipal, is most accurate; your remarks on international obligation are very judicious, and the whole is expressed in language felicitous and pungent. "Benevolent neutrality" is an absurd contradiction in terms. It would be a breach of the spirit of neutrality if a neutral Government (apart from *acts*) expressed in *words* a more favourable opinion of the rights or merits of the cause of one belligerent than of the other; and it would be a serious violation of neutrality if a neutral nation guided itself by any principle or rule of conduct (however just or meritorious in itself) which had not been previously recognised and sanctioned by international law (that is, by the usage of nations). I carry this so far as to hold that if a nation, intending to be neutral, should, on the eve of a war between two other nations, alter its own municipal law so as to impose a duty or restraint on its own subjects in their dealings with the intending belligerents which was beyond the obligations of international law, it would be a just subject of complaint by that belligerent whose advantages were diminished by such unexpected alteration.

'On this principle, the Government were right in abstaining from introducing into the recent statute a prohibition of the sale and exportation of munitions of war.

'The power of prohibition given to the Sovereign by the Customs Act was an enactment for the benefit and protection of *England alone*.

'It never was intended to give the Crown the right of taking away any trade right of an English subject, unless it was, *on English national grounds*, necessary so to do. No foreign nation can *require* this power to be exercised. The foreigner has no interest in it, and it ought not to be used for the purpose of supplementing international law.

'If there be a discretionary power, conferred by the municipal law of a country, which enables it to do more than international

obligation requires, the exercise of such power is *purely discretionary*. But if, as between two belligerents, the exercise of such power, *after hostilities have commenced*, would be productive of benefit to the one and not to the other, the neutral country possessing the power ought not to exercise it, *unless* the exercise be demanded by its own personal and peculiar interests. The *status quo ante bellum* must be left unaltered.

'I am sorry that the rest and recreation, which you and every member of the Government have so amply earned by the labours of the session, are so rudely broken by the cares and anxieties consequent on the frightful condition of France.

'How glad I should be to see you if any chance should bring you westward. Don't trouble to notice this letter.

'With very kind regards, yours sincerely,

'WESTBURY.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD WESTBURY.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September* 21, 1870.

'MY DEAR LORD WESTBURY,—I was delighted to get your note —so kind and so useful. I shall permit myself to use the ammunition you give me, when Bernstorff again exposes himself, as is likely, to the "malevolent neutral."

'Nothing I should like so much as to pay you a visit, but I dare not run away from London and Walmer at present.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

After any grave crisis persons are always to be found ready to assert on the hearsay evidence of some doubtful diplomatic authority, or of an alleged conversation with an unnamed crowned head, that at some undefined moment a bold word opportunely spoken would have altered the whole course of events. Nor have such statements been lacking in regard to the events of 1870. This narrative, however, will have made it clear that the war was a *combat à outrance*, long delayed, but once begun to be fought out to the bitter end. The principal actors in the great tragedy have themselves in many cases narrated their own personal share in it; others have written fuller historical narratives. But neither in the pages of autobiography, nor in those of what is, or purports to be, history, has anything yet been produced to show even a *primâ facie* case for supposing that

any step, short of an armed mediation, could have been successfully undertaken by the British Government, either alone or in concert with the other Powers, to bring the belligerents to terms; or to make it improbable that an armed mediation would have enlarged rather than have curtailed the area of conflict.

'We pressed as strongly as possible upon the Emperor [Lord Granville afterwards wrote] that he had no cause for war with Germany. When he declared it, we announced our neutrality with the full assent of Parliament and the country. The French now complain as they did then, naturally but not reasonably, that we did not come to their help when they were down. They say we did not even interfere to prevent the bombardment of Paris. We did indirectly try to prevent it; but how could we have officially insisted, without a total abandonment of our neutrality, that the victorious Germans were not to do so, when the French Government declared their irrevocable decision not to yield a stone of a fortress or an inch of territory?

'When peace was made, we remonstrated on the enormous indemnity claimed by the Germans. After we had done so, that indemnity was considerably reduced. We cannot say whether it was done in consequence of our remonstrances or not, or merely after them, but the French Ambassador thanked us for the service we rendered.

'The great complaint of the French is that we circumscribed the war. This was no injury to France; for if Austria had joined her, Russia would have joined Germany, and the conflagration would have been general. In any case this was no proof of our inactivity and indifference. . . .'[1]

The defeat of France opened up the fountains of the diplomatic deep. 'There is no longer a Europe,' Count Beust, who, if he could see through millstones, could also always coin an epigram, was reported to have said.

'With respect to Alsace and Lorraine [Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville at the close of the year] there is no practical difference

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, March 28, 1880. A correspondence at this time took place between Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, and Mr. Gladstone, owing to some statements made in the press, charging Lord Granville with having missed several opportunities in 1870 of mediating effectually in the French interest.

between us. Still inclining to regret that we did not indicate an opinion when Bismarck gave us a right to say he challenged one, I am far from thinking we should now say anything on the subject. My sole desire is that we should sift it among ourselves, and not be taken unprepared should it hereafter come up in a practical form. For while I more and more feel the deep culpability of France, I have an apprehension that this violent laceration and transfer is to lead us from bad to worse, and to be the beginning of a new series of European complications. . . .'[1]

Mr. Gladstone was quickly justified by events. The denunciation by Russia of the clauses of the Treaty of Paris relating to the Black Sea was expected. It soon came. By Article XI. of the Treaty of Paris the Black Sea had been declared to be 'neutralised,' and open to the mercantile marine of every nation, but in perpetuity interdicted to the flag of war either of the Powers possessing its coasts or of any other Power, subject to certain exceptions relating to light vessels expressed in Articles XIV. and XIX. By Article I. of a further Convention between Turkey and Russia respecting the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus, annexed to the Treaty, the Sultan undertook 'that so long as the Porte is at peace his Majesty will admit no foreign ship of war into the Straits.' All the Powers agreed to respect this provision. By the same Convention, Russia and Turkey also each agreed to limit their naval forces in the Black Sea to six vessels of 50 metres in length and of a tonnage not exceeding 800 tons, together with four light steamers or sailing vessels not to exceed 200 tons each. By this arrangement a strict equality of force in the Black Sea was secured between the two Powers, and until war had actually broken out Turkey was precluded from allowing the warships of her allies to enter the Black Sea. Such was the substantial result of the long negotiations which had commenced at Vienna in 1855 and ended in Paris in 1856.

The neutrality of Russia during the Danish War had been the payment for the refusal of Prussia to join in even a diplomatic campaign on behalf of Poland; and now in the

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 10, 1870.

face of the certain territorial aggrandisement of Germany at the expense of France, Russia expected a *quid pro quo* as the price of her consent to the alteration of the map of Europe in the interest of Germany. No astonishment, therefore, prevailed when, in October 1870, Prince Gortchakoff in a circular to the Powers announced that Russia no longer considered herself bound by the clauses of the Treaty of Paris neutralising the Black Sea, and specifically denounced the articles of the Treaty of Paris which established that 'neutralisation.' Prince Bismarck would appear to have given his consent to such a step on the part of Russia prior to the outbreak of war, nor is this actually inconsistent with his subsequent statement that he was surprised at the issue of the circular. Ancient jealousy and suspicion caused Prince Gortchakoff to move sooner than was generally anticipated, as he was anxious to appear not to be beholden to his German rival, but to be acting in entire independence. A more solid reason was that he wished to secure his object while his great rival was still involved in France. In face of the situation thus created Lord Granville decided to send Mr. Odo Russell on a special mission to the headquarters of the German army in France, where it had been impossible for the Ambassador to the Court of Berlin, Lord Augustus Loftus, to follow the King. 'I have telegraphed to Odo Russell,' Lord Granville told Mr. Gladstone, 'to be silent about conditions as to peace, and not to offer mediation or good offices unless likely to be acceptable or to be effective.'[1] Before leaving England, Mr. Odo Russell confidentially ascertained the opinions of Lord Russell and of Lord Derby on the question with which he was particularly charged. Lord Russell told him that his opinion was in favour of the modification of the Black Sea clauses, which he had long believed could not be permanent. Lord Derby said 'he would fight for the neutrality of Egypt, but not for the neutrality of the Black Sea.'[2] But in their opinion—as in that of the Cabinet—it was impossible to allow a treaty to

[1] Lord Augustus Loftus to Lord Granville, December 10, 1870.
[2] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 5, 9, 1870.

be torn up and flung in the face of Europe by one of the signatories, unless this country were unreservedly to accept the truth of the epigram attributed to Count Beust, that Europe no longer existed, and that whoever might be the most successful soldier or the most unscrupulous diplomatist of the day must be tamely allowed to trample on the title-deeds of European public law,

'Vana supervacui dicens chirographa ligni.'

Mr. Odo Russell left London on November 12 and went to Versailles. His instructions were very general in character, and a large latitude was left to him to act according to circumstances and the frame of mind in which he found Count Bismarck. He had already got a clear impression, which he afterwards expressed at more than one critical moment of his subsequent career, that what Count Bismarck respected above all things was strength ;[1] and after feeling his way in a long interview with him on November 21, he curtly told the Count that 'unless he could get Russia to withdraw the circular we should be compelled *with or without allies* to go to war.' The Count after some further argument ended by recognising that we had received a 'kick' from Russia, and that putting himself in our place he would not recede. The envoy had played a bold card and had won. He had acted on his own responsibility in using the exact language which he employed. But for that language there was a sufficient diplomatic justification to be found in the stipulations of the Tripartite Treaty of April 15, 1856, because the signatories of that Treaty were bound to consider any violation of the provisions of the principal Treaty of March 30 of the same year as a *casus belli.* The victory which he gained was really due to an accurate analysis of the character of the great man with whom he was dealing. 'Promising peace is as unwise as to threaten war,' Lord Granville wrote to his envoy. 'A sort of instinct that the bumps of combativeness are to be found somewhere in your head has helped us much during the last

1 Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 30, 1870.

five months.'[1] But it was the recognition on this occasion of the same bumps as existing in Count Bismarck's head, together with the bump of sympathy for them in the heads of others, far more than his own possession of them, or a correct reading of the clauses of the Treaty of 1856, which rendered Mr. Odo Russell successful in this historic interview.[2]

Count Bismarck declined to entertain a suggestion from the British diplomatist that the simplest course under existing circumstances would be for Prussia to accede to the Tripartite Treaty, and thereby summarily stop the irregular action of Russia. But Count Bismarck described the Russian circular as 'ill-advised and ill-timed.'

'I am inclined to believe [Mr. Odo Russell wrote] in the truth of his repeated assertions that no secret understanding exists between him and Russia; but, on the other hand, I see that there is an open, avowed, unconscious alliance between them, which he not only does not attempt to deny, but openly declares to be a national and family alliance of friendship and gratitude for past services, which it is his duty to maintain until future events bring about more advantageous alliances. . . .'

England and Austria were, however, Count Bismarck declared in words which the envoy carefully noted, 'the natural allies of Germany,' and an alliance with them would offer advantages to Germany which she could not prudently reject, even at the cost of sacrifices and of existing friendships.[3] At the same time Count Bismarck informed Mr. Odo Russell that the Empress Eugénie had tried to enter on 'negotiations on the basis of a union of territory and population, not larger than Savoy and Nice,' but that he had rejected them; and that M. Thiers also, 'through a third person, had offered to make peace and cede Alsace and Lorraine in exchange for Belgium, *by giving France to King Leopold*, and that King Leopold was most favourably disposed to the scheme,' but that he had rejected these proposals also.[4]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Odo Russell, December 8, 1870.

[2] *Correspondence relating to the Treaty of March* 1856, No. 76, pp. 44, 45; No. 78, p. 46. (C. 245.)

[3] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, December 18, 1870.

[4] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, December 18, 1870.

To all proposals as to giving lenient treatment to France, whether in regard to an armistice, the revictualling of Paris, the bombardment of Paris, and the question of the cession of territory, Count Bismarck turned an absolutely deaf ear.

The result of these conversations was a suggestion from Count Bismarck of a Conference on the Black Sea question at St. Petersburg. No action of Lord Granville in connection with foreign affairs has been more severely criticised than that which he now took. Those who judge solely from the reports of partisan writers are under the impression that he tamely acquiesced in and recorded the decision of the Russian Government. History tells a different tale. Article XIV. of the Treaty of Paris concluded by a distinct statement that the annexed convention could not be annulled or modified without the assent of the Powers signatory of the Treaty. Lord Granville had at once noted that when the Russian circular intimated the intention of the Czar no longer to consider himself bound thereby, a diplomatic error had been committed which gave British diplomacy an opportunity in the difficult situation in which it was placed. It was only too evident that with Russia hostile, with France helpless, and Austria even more unwilling than usual to move—as she was in the throes of an acute phase of the eternal struggle among the various nationalities of the Empire—the maintenance of the Treaty of Paris as it stood was no longer possible. A Conference at St. Petersburg merely to annul the denounced articles would have borne the appearance of a pilgrimage to Canossa. Mr. Odo Russell was accordingly instructed to inform Count Bismarck that no Conference would be accepted unless on the basis of an express understanding that it should be in no way prejudiced by any previous assumption as to the result of its deliberations, and he declined the suggestion of St. Petersburg as the place of meeting.[1]

[1] Papers were presented to Parliament in the following year. See particularly on the above subject the letter of Mr. Odo Russell of February 27, 1871, to Mr. Gladstone (quoted *in extenso* in the *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 355), and Lord Granville's letter to Mr. Odo Russell, December 8, 1870.

In the negotiations which followed and ultimately led to the assembling of the Conference in London in the month of January 1871, Lord Granville in the first place refused to recognise the separate position of Russia in the matter, and obtained a practical retractation of the circular by an express recognition of the doctrine by all the Powers represented, including Russia, that no European treaty can be modified or declared to be no longer binding by the action of one of the parties to it alone. The exact terms were, however, hard to arrange. Some fourteen drafts of the Protocol were made before a form could be found which Russia would accept. At length on January 17, 1871, Russia, along with the other Powers, signed a recognition 'that it is an essential principle of the law of nations, that no Power can liberate itself from the engagements of a treaty, nor modify the stipulations thereof, unless with the consent of the contracting Powers, by means of an amicable arrangement.' This, however, was not all. It was far more important that while the provisions of 1856 affecting the Black Sea were abrogated, the new Treaty contained an article maintaining the principle of the closing of the Dardanelles and the Bosphorus established by the separate Convention of March 30, 1856, with an additional power expressly given to the Sultan 'to open the said Straits in time of peace to the vessels of war of friendly and allied Powers, in case the Sublime Porte should judge it necessary, in order to secure the execution of the stipulations of the Treaty of Paris of March 30, 1856.'[1] The net result of Lord Granville's diplomacy, therefore, was, first, to compel Russia formally to sign a renunciation of her claim to tear up treaties; and, secondly, to give the command of the Black Sea to Turkey. While both Powers were free to place any number of ships they thought proper on that sea, Russia could only do so by building them, with great difficulty and at great expense, in her own Black Sea ports; whereas Turkey had now placed at her command the

[1] The whole subject was ably discussed at the time in a letter in the *Times* of April 6, 1871, signed 'Amicus' (Sir Robert Meade).

resources of all the shipyards of her allies, to say nothing of her own permanent war navy lying close at hand in the Bosphorus. The great advantage was thus offered to Turkey, had she known how to use it effectively, of being able to invite the ships of her allies to pass into the Black Sea in time of peace, without waiting, as was the case under the former treaties, for war actually to break out, when such a step might prove too late, as in the case of the attack on the Turkish fleet at Sinope before the outbreak of the Crimean War.

Many violent criticisms were made, when Parliament met, on what was described as an abject surrender to Russia, and Mr. Otway, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs, resigned his office. The only reasonable criticism came from Mr. Disraeli. He advocated the only possible alternative course in statesmanlike language. Russia, he argued, ought to have been told she would be left to take the future consequences of her separate action.[1] If this, however, meant, Mr. Gladstone replied, that a new and dangerous source of controversy was to be kept indefinitely open, when only too many already existed in Europe, the argument carried the reply with it. Europe was now in a state of diplomatic paralysis, and France, the natural ally of Great Britain in this question, was helpless. M. Favre had been appointed to represent her at the Conference; but notwithstanding all the efforts of Lord Granville it was impossible to agree on the terms of a safe-conduct with Prince Bismarck to enable the French Foreign Minister to leave Paris. Only at the last sitting of the Conference on March 13, 1871, did a French representative—the Duc de Broglie—appear.

The broad result of these transactions was to show that a transference of the centre of European politics had taken place from Paris to Berlin; and in Berlin the bitter feelings against

[1] This would appear to be the speech alluded to by M. Sorel (*Histoire Diplomatique de la Guerre Franco-Allemande*, i. 254), where he refers to a speech of Mr. Disraeli in which the substitution of an 'armed neutrality' for the policy of 'diplomatic neutrality' is mentioned, but the speech in question does not bear out the ample meaning attached to it by M. Sorel.

the British Government still persisted even after the conclusion of peace, in consequence of 'our supposed French proclivities' during the war. This state of things, in the opinion of Mr. Odo Russell, who in 1872 was appointed Ambassador to Berlin, was 'as unreasonable as it was distressing;'[1] and notwithstanding all the efforts of the Court and of the society of the German capital to give a warm welcome to the new representative of this country, it was not possible for him to conceal the truth of the situation in regard to the feelings of the nation at large from his own experienced eyes. 'Napoleon,' he wrote to Lord Granville, 'was not more powerful than Bismarck is at this moment.'[2] But in 1872 the German Chancellor plunged into a renewal of the 'War of the Investitures,' and the Pope, in consequence of the School Inspection Bill and other measures associated in history with the name of Doctor Falk, in May refused to receive Cardinal Hohenlohe as Ambassador. 'Prince Bismarck,' Mr. Odo Russell told Lord Granville, 'thinking himself more infallible than the Pope, cannot tolerate two Infallibilities in Europe, and fancies he can select and appoint the next Pontiff as he would a Prussian general, who will carry out his orders to the Catholic clergy in Germany and elsewhere.'[3] With this most dangerous of all struggles on his hands, one involving 'a task more difficult than beating the French armies,' and engaged as he was on the construction of the great fundamental institutions of the newly created Empire, he had no desire to encourage any great European struggle in which his country might be involved, whatever might be the ambitions of the military party; and he desired above all things to secure the good-will and if possible the alliance of Great Britain, as he had already informed Mr. Odo Russell at Versailles. The efforts of Prince Bismarck to obtain some arrangement of the kind, the apprehensions of successive British Foreign Ministers that they might thereby get involved in a guarantee of the recent German annexations

[1] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 3, 1872.
[2] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, April 6, October 18, 1872.
[3] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 9, 1872.

in France, and their consequent unwillingness to give any definite pledge—such as Prince Bismarck desired—are the key to much of the diplomatic history of the next twelve years.

At the end of 1871 Lord Granville was in Scotland as Minister in attendance on the Queen at Balmoral, and then went to Inverary to take part in the rejoicings on the occasion of the marriage of the Marquis of Lorne with her Royal Highness Princess Louise. There he found everything charming, except the climate, as may be gathered out of the following extracts from some letters written at the time.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LADY GRANVILLE

BALMORAL, *August* 20, 1871.

'Yesterday we had a Council, which I got over as quick as I could. I then had to wait for a telegram telling us what Bills had been passed and required the Royal Assent. This prevented my going out with the Duke of Edinburgh after some stags near the house. He found none, and went off to Dalhousie at one. I took Stansfeld up the hill, and we met Ponsonby and Dr. Robertson and the gillies coming home. Grant proposed trying another corner. They lent me a rifle. A stag broke out. Dr. Robertson fired twice without effect, when the stag fell to my unerring aim. Donald Stuart was at my elbow in a minute to congratulate the "unpractical mon."'

INVERARY, *August* 23, 1871.

'The breakfast did pretty well. People speaking together more. But weather threatening. . . . I have made heaps of acquaintances, all of whose surnames were spelt in the same way, and I have given up the effort of learning their places.

'The weather might be worse. It might rain continuously; as it is, the heavens open and let down all the water in them, and the sun reasserts itself for a quarter of an hour; and as the people do not seem to mind getting moist, and the effects of the light and shade upon the hills, the woods, and the crowd of shipping all decked with flags are marvellous, we are happy and contented. The Princess and Lorne arrived an hour and a half before their time, to the annoyance of Archy, who had not got his regiment in line, and of the boys who were to have replaced the horses for the last three or four hundred yards, but with no real detriment to the enthusiastic reception which

the Lornes got. She did her part well, and so did Lorne. Argyll looked the chief all over; his own head being the only unbonneted one. Addresses and replies in profusion.

. . . . . .

'An immense dinner, forty-four. Very handsome. The Princess very smart in her Clan Campbell necklace, to which I was proud to remember you were a subscriber. I sat between the Duchess (rather tired, but less nervous than yesterday), and Lady Ord, the daughter of the Trentham clergyman. Neighbours flocked in during the evening to see the fireworks, which, odd to say, performed their part well, notwithstanding the rain. . . . I propose leaving this place on Saturday.'

INVERARY, *August* 27, 1871.

'Your mother will disapprove of a Campbell residing in England having told his chief that there was not so much "reign of law" in Argyllshire as "law of rain."'

# CHAPTER III

## THE GENEVA ARBITRATION

## 1871–1874

'I have only seen the extracts from Lord Russell: there is something touching in his confession that the four days indecision as to the Alabama was all his own fault: it cost the country a million a day—but that won't prevent him from being the chief political figure in fifty years of English history.'—Lord Houghton to Lord Granville, January 17, 1875.

NOTWITHSTANDING the hopes which Lord Odo Russell based on his conversations with Prince Bismarck, that a cordial understanding might be established between Germany and Great Britain, it became necessary as Lord Granville told the House of Lords in 1871, in view of the possibility of further European complications, to look at the international relations of Great Britain with foreign States from a new standpoint.[1] Canning had said that he had called the New World into existence in order to redress the balance of the Old. Words which were little more than a piece of splendid rhetoric when applied to the South American republics, might become a living truth if applied to the relations of the United States of North America with Great Britain. But there was a permanent obstacle in existence to a good understanding with the United States. A number of claims arising out of alleged breaches of neutrality by Great Britain during the Civil War were still in dispute, and were producing an ever increasing degree of bitterness as time went on, and they still remained unsettled. How the Alabama succeeded in escaping from the port of Liverpool in 1862, and then took in her armament and entered on a long career of maritime depredation under the Confederate flag, is a chapter of history which need not be here repeated. The Government of the United

[1] *Hansard*, ccvi. 1841.

States considered the Government of Great Britain responsible for the negligence which, it was asserted, had been shown by the Commissioners of Customs at Liverpool in allowing the ship to clear; and they refused to be satisfied with the answer given by Lord Russell, both at the time and subsequently, that the requirements of British municipal law as then existing had been complied with. Arbitration had frequently been suggested as affording a way out of the difficulty. Opinion in England, though originally adverse, had gradually become more favourable to such a course, and Lord Russell in 1871, though still opposed to arbitration, had admitted that, although to submit such questions to arbitration was inconsistent with the dignity of the country, concessions to the American demands, in some shape or other, would, in his opinion, be wise. It was a very fair question, he thought, whether the five days between July 24 and 29, 1862, were lost by want of due diligence on the part of the Commissioners of Customs and their officer at Liverpool; whether the Law Officers were entitled to take the time they did in considering the matter; and whether an order to detain the vessel should not have been at once sent down from London. He subsequently also admitted that, even if the real fault lay with the Commissioners of Customs, the technical responsibility, whatever it was, evidently lay with himself as Secretary for Foreign Affairs, and therefore with the Government of the day.

'It appears to me [he wrote in the Preface to his published Speeches] that if the officers of the Customs were misled or blinded by the general partiality to the cause of the South known to prevail at Liverpool, and that if a *primâ facie* case of negligence could be made out—not an ascertained case after due inquiry and investigation—Great Britain might fairly grant a sum equivalent to the amount of losses sustained by the captures of the Alabama.' [1]

But there were very alarming calculations in existence as to what those losses might be found to represent. When Lord Stanley became Foreign Secretary in 1866, a general arbitration treaty was agreed upon; and it was signed by

[1] Preface to published Speeches, ii, 260; *Recollections and Suggestions*, by Earl Russell, pp. 277–407.

his successor, Lord Clarendon, with Mr. Reverdy Johnson, then United States Minister in London. This treaty experienced the not infrequent fate of such agreements, for it was rejected by the Senate of the United States : fortunately, perhaps, for this country, for the terms of the treaty might have enabled the United States to claim for indirect as well as direct injury, though the Senate appears to have been of opinion that the right of the United States to make such indirect claims was not so clearly expressed as in their opinion it ought to have been. When Lord Granville succeeded Lord Clarendon the question was therefore still open, and a source of constant irritation and growing danger to the friendly relations of the two nations. Besides the so-called Alabama claims, there were other outstanding questions. These were connected with the depredations of the Florida and other vessels ; with the San Juan boundary on the western coast ; with the rights of fishery on the eastern coast ; and a variety of points which had arisen in consequence of the termination of the treaty for commercial reciprocity between the United States and the Confederation of Canada.

It was proposed by Lord Granville to attempt to bring all these questions within one comprehensive settlement, and thereby once and for all to put an end to the silent ill-will which was endangering the friendship of the two great branches of the English race and preventing their co-operation, and it was hoped that the United States, as a set-off to any concessions to be made by the British Government, would consent to a settlement of the claims of Canada for damages done by the recent Fenian raid.

'I imagine [Lord Granville had written to Mr. Gladstone] that the best bargain for this country would be to let the San Juan Arbitration go by default, on condition that the Americans gave up the Alabama claims of all sorts. It would take away the grievance of the Americans, and we should give up what the Americans are sure to get in the end by fair or foul means, and what is of no use to us, and sure to be a cause of difficulty hereafter. It is probable that the law officers, after seeing the cases and counter-cases, would come to the opinion that the words of the Bulwer Treaty are so vague, that it is almost hopeless to expect a fair arbitration to give

a decision in favour of either party. But I presume that if we were to take this course, we should be turned out, and branded as traitors for the rest of our lives. I should not mind this so much, if I was clear that it would not be unfair to Canada.'[1]

An entirely different course was therefore adopted, and the plan of arbitration was revived; largely at the suggestion of Sir John Rose, who, during his visit to the United States, had become impressed with the idea that it would be accepted by the Government at Washington, and afforded the only way out of the imbroglio.[2]

The main question was whether or not due diligence had, or had not, been exercised by the representatives of the British Government with reference to the Alabama. The reply of the British Government had hitherto been that the diligence to be exercised was to be measured strictly by the requirements of municipal law, which in their view had not been violated. To this it was still replied in the United States that such an answer, though it might be good in a British court, was not necessarily one to be accepted without question by an independent Power which deemed itself injured by the defective condition of British municipal law. It was now agreed as a first step towards arbitration to appoint a British Commission to proceed to Washington, where it was to meet an equal number of American Commissioners, and there draw up a treaty dealing with all the matters in dispute. Still further to facilitate a settlement, the Commissioners were instructed to agree to the recognition of three 'new rules' as governing the case of the Alabama and the other vessels—rules which it was proposed should thenceforward form part of the law of nations—viz. that a neutral Government was in future bound—

1. To use due diligence to prevent the fitting out in its territory of any vessel which it had reasonable ground to believe was intended to carry on war against a nation with which the neutral was at peace, and to use like diligence to prevent the departure of any such vessel.

[1] February 17, 1872. The San Juan boundary depended on the interpretation of the Treaty of Washington of June 12, 1846, negotiated by Sir Henry Bulwer.

[2] See *supra*, p. 29.

2. Not to permit a belligerent to make use of its ports or waters as a basis of operation against another.

3. To exercise due diligence in its own ports and waters to prevent the infraction of these rules.

The purport of these new rules was at the same time embodied in an Act amending the Foreign Enlistment Acts, and thus became part of British municipal aw.[1] It could also be fairly argued that the rules went very little, if at all, beyond what Great Britain practically admitted to have been already a public duty under the Foreign Enlistment Acts 1861 to 1865, and that they only remedied an unsuspected weakness.[2] A special declaration was also to be allowed to be inserted in the treaty, that it was the desire of the two high contracting parties to maintain and strengthen friendly relations between the two countries; and the British Commissioners were further permitted, while carefully avoiding any admission of past negligence on the part of the British authorities, to express their regret that the Alabama had escaped. The Commissioners selected were Lord de Grey, President of the Council, and a member of the Cabinet; Dr. Montague Bernard, Chichele Professor of International Law in the University of Oxford; Sir Edward Thornton, British Minister to the United States; Sir John Macdonald, the Prime Minister of Canada; and last, but not least, Sir Stafford Northcote, whose selection, as the colleague of Lord de Grey, Lord Granville desired should stamp the Commission with the seal of the approval of both political parties. After negotiations which lasted two months the Commissioners signed a treaty in May.

The agreement did not escape criticism, and, in common with a large body of public opinion, Lord Russell objected to the proposal to judge past conduct by *ex post facto* rules.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

BALMORAL CASTLE, *June* 4, 1871

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—As soon as the Queen heard that you were at Invergarry, she desired me to telegraph to you her wish to see

[1] 33 & 34 Vict. c. 90.

[2] See some observations by Sir Stafford Northcote in his Life by Mr. A. Lang, i. 244; *Hansard*, ccvi. 1839–1849.

you, and commanded Lady Granville and me to stay two more days for your visit. Her Majesty said to Lady Granville, "I hope he will come. I like Mr. Bright."

'I have shown her Majesty your telegram and your last letter. She desires me to say that she perfectly understands your reason, that she is glad you are taking care of yourself, and she hopes to see you at some later period in the year.

'I cannot say how pleased I was to get your congratulations on the American Treaty. At the end of the autumn I heard from so many sources that there was an honest desire to treat, that I asked leave of Gladstone and of the Queen to send Sir John Rose on a secret mission to ascertain what chance there might be of a successful result. He did his part well, and although not certain, he gave us sufficient encouragement to proceed. I asked Lord Derby to go, but he objected, partly on private grounds, but principally because he thought it a wrong move.

'Often as I miss you in the Cabinet, I never regretted your absence more than during our discussions on this matter, but all has ended well. There will be much criticism, but no real opposition. Lord Russell was very indignant at first, but I believe is moderated.

'Roundell Palmer will support us, and Dizzy will not desert Northcote.

'Over and above the pleasure of seeing you, I should much have liked to discuss with you the line of argument to adopt.

'If my telegram on fishing was pert, it was not unnatural on the part of a gouty gentleman of fifty-six, who had killed his first salmon the previous day. Yesterday I took one of $21\frac{1}{2}$ lbs. You ask me whether it was fair fishing. I can only say that it was a combination of science and art which enabled me at the opportune moment to substitute a boiled prawn for an unattractive fly.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

From the commencement of the discussions at Washington, one of the chief difficulties had arisen from the desire of the American Commissioners to introduce claims for indirect damages arising as the consequence of the depredations of the Alabama, the Florida and other vessels, in addition to the claims for the actual damage directly caused by them. These claims were vague in character, and might evidently give rise to an enormous and indefinite liability, for they included—

1. Loss by the transfer of the mercantile marine of the United States to the English flag.
2. Enhanced premiums for marine insurance.
3. The prolongation of the war.
4. The addition of a large sum to the cost of the war.

It was yet an additional source of difficulty that M. Catacazy, the Russian Minister at Washington, employed every resource which a long experience of diplomatic intrigue afforded, to sow distrust between the British and the American Commissioners, to influence the members of the Senate in a hostile sense, and to suggest difficulties in any quarter where such suggestions might be fruitful.

In the course of the negotiations the American Commissioners laid down many conditions, some of which the British Commissioners at once declined and even refused to refer for consideration to their Government; while others they referred back, thinking it their duty to inform the Government that upon their answer the continuance of the negotiations might depend. In considering these questions the Government felt the responsibility they would incur in breaking off the negotiations. Nevertheless they at once declined to yield in these cases, and to go beyond the large concessions which they had already made in commencing the negotiation.[1] To this firmness on the part of Lord Granville, Sir Stafford Northcote bore emphatic testimony.

Sir Stafford Northcote to Lord Granville.

Washington, *April* 14, 1871.

'My dear Lord Granville,—I hope that by the time this reaches you we shall have signed our Treaty and got it before the Senate. I trust you will not have cut it about much, for our friends here are terrible fellows at taking advantage of every possible opportunity to bring in words about national claims which we have over and over again shut out, and have had to be very cross over. The history of our exploits will never be written as it deserves to be, and De Grey will never get all the credit he deserves for his strategy, though I hope he will get some for the result of it.

[1] *Hansard*, ccvi. 1847–1852.

'I will not inflict any more tediousness upon you to-day, but I hope soon to be able to write and congratulate you on a successful termination to your well-timed enterprise.

'Believe me, yours very faithfully,

'STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.'

WASHINGTON, *May* 5, 1871.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I must thank you sincerely for your very kind letter. Indeed, I feel that I have a great deal in the way of thanks to pay you. I doubt whether I have ever properly expressed to you my sense of the high compliment which I felt your original invitation to me to be. I can assure you I have often felt nervous lest I should give you reason to repent your confidence, and it is only now that we have got through our part of the work, that I feel myself quite able to say how very highly I have valued it. It will be a very enviable privilege to sign one's name to the Treaty next Monday; and I think we shall all be a little proud of it even if anything should happen to it in the Senate. But I am myself very hopeful that the Senate will confirm it. I am very glad you have allowed us to stay; and glad too that you have forbidden us to discuss alterations. I believe we are on sufficiently good terms with most of the leading senators to be able to talk over any points of difficulty with them, and very likely we may be able to remove objections. I am quite sure that our going away would have been used as an argument against the Treaty, and that "the author of evil," Catacazy, would have rejoiced to avail himself of it. He is, I believe, working hard against us, but we may counteract his influence. We are still sorely puzzled about Sumner, who is I fear too civil, but who talks in an encouraging strain to some of our American colleagues, as well as being very democratic towards ourselves. The Democrats, too, are still a mystery. We shall have a great advantage if we are able to meet them day by day while the discussion is going on, for they are some of them very good men, and one at least (Bayard) a really nice fellow,[1] and they will hardly like to talk friendly at night and vote hostile in the morning. Still the caucus-power is very great here, and though it is commonly brought to bear on personal questions rather than on questions of principle, the present is an occasion on which we might possibly suffer from its exercise. We shall be able to form a pretty good opinion how things will go in the course of the first week, and we shall be free to leave by the steamer of the 24th, whether the Senate has come to a vote by that time or not.

[1] Afterwards Ambassador to Great Britain.

'As regards the past, I hope you have not been very angry with us. I dare say we have been unreasonably querulous, and perhaps have shown too much tendency to insubordination; but we fully recognise the force of what you say as to the advantage which in the end we are likely to derive from your criticisms and from your "close-fistedness." Indeed, I long ago remarked to De Grey that it was a good thing for us in our dealings with the American Commissioners that there was a power in the background which they could not get at; and I have no doubt that if it had not been for your stripes we should have been too facile, especially in the early days, before we knew our men. Latterly, I think we have had the whip hand of them, and De Grey has managed Fish most skilfully.

'I have told you already how much De Grey has impressed us all by his judgment, tact, and temper, and by the high tone he has maintained all through the affair.

'Believe me, yours very faithfully,

'STAFFORD H. NORTHCOTE.'

The Treaty of Washington bore date May 8, 1871. Under its terms the Alabama and kindred claims were to be referred to a court of five arbitrators, who were to meet at Geneva, appointed by the Queen, the President of the United States, the Emperor of Brazil, the King of Italy, and the President of the Swiss Confederation. The jurisdiction of the arbitrators was to be complete and final. Criticisms soon made themselves heard. Lord Russell complained that all the concessions had been made by Great Britain. Lord Granville was able to reply that in the very beginning of the protocols, Mr. Fish would be found renewing the propositions which he had frequently made before in regard to far larger or 'indirect claims,' and that these had not been accepted; that a tribunal was to be established under the Treaty to decide in respect of claims by British subjects for illegal captures by American cruisers; and that, although the unwillingness of the United States Government to consent to bring into arbitration the claims of Canada in regard to the Fenian raid was a matter of regret, it was certainly untrue to say that the Government had conceded everything which the United States had demanded. Admitting, then—as it was tacitly admitted—that the acceptance of the three rules meant, in regard to the

Alabama and kindred claims, the acceptance beforehand of an adverse verdict from the Tribunal, the amount only remaining to be settled, the whole question really came to this: whether the removal of the permanent ill-will between the two nations was worth this concession or not. On the answer to this question the public judgment on the Treaty must depend. Fortunately it was clearly in the affirmative, notwithstanding the age and authority of Lord Russell and a strong under-current of discontent which carried many along with it. A hostile motion brought forward by the late Liberal Premier in the House of Lords on June 12, 1871, was not accepted even in that assembly, so seldom unwilling to miss an opportunity of embarrassing a Liberal Government, and it was ultimately withdrawn. Lord Derby gave a steady support to Lord Granville. The selection of Sir Stafford Northcote as a Commissioner paralysed any factious opposition in the House of Commons, and there was a prospect of Mr. Bright being able to appear again in his place in the House of Commons to defend the Treaty.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

16 BRUTON STREET, LONDON, W., *December* 14, 1871.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—Ever since you told me that you were going to Hawarden, I have been longing to write to you on the subject which the resident there has so much at heart.

'The very kind inquiry which Calcraft, who has just called, tells me you sent about my gout, gives me an excuse.

'I need not say that nothing would give me personally for public and private reasons greater pleasure than to be again connected with you in official life. But that you know, and it is not the question. No one has a right to call upon you to injure your health, which has already suffered from overwork given to the public. If you feel yourself unequal to the task, it is a duty you owe to yourself and to your family to take whatever further rest may be necessary.

'I hear, however, from so many quarters of your restored health, that I believe it is more a question of whether you shall resume work as an independent member or as a member of the Government. I doubt whether the feeling of anxious responsibility, which is the thing which does the mischief, will be less in one case than

in the other. The actual work, on the conditions which Gladstone proposes, will not be great.

'The prospects of the Government are somewhat doubtful, and on their fate depends for some time the future of the Liberal party. My belief is that with some crises Gladstone will pull through. With your authority, your support, and your advice, he is certain to do so. I lay stress on this, because I believe your and my feelings about Gladstone are the same; and in face of the unjust prejudices which in various quarters exist against him, his friends are bound to do their best.

'There are many things which I could say, but which are difficult to write. In the meanwhile you will say, "I asked after his gout: why does he send me all this irrelevant twaddle?"

'My general health, thanks, is quite restored, and there is only just sufficient of the enemy left in the knee, and the two tendons of Achilles to prevent my standing or walking.

'I trust you are satisfied with the progress your daughter is making.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Sir Alexander Cockburn, Lord Chief Justice of England, was the British member of the Court of Arbitration; Mr. Charles Francis Adams represented the United States; M. Jacques Staempfli the Swiss Confederation; Viscount Itajuba the Emperor of Brazil, and Count Sclopis the King of Italy. Count Sclopis was appointed President of the Tribunal.[1] Unfortunately the troubles connected with the Treaty did not disappear with the withdrawal of Lord Russell's motion. It had been believed that no doubt existed that under the terms of the Treaty the 'indirect claims' had been finally got rid of. Great, therefore, was the indignation and alarm in England early in 1872 when, on the publication of the American 'case' to be presented to the Geneva Tribunal, it was found that these claims were nevertheless included in it. Lord Russell was again at once on the war-path, and announced his intention, Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Bright, 'of blowing into the air both the Treaty and the Government with it.'[2]

[1] The Agent of the United States was Mr. Bancroft Davis, and Mr. Evarts their counsel. Lord Tenterden and Sir Roundell Palmer represented Great Britain in similar capacities.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Bright, December 17, 1872.

The controversy turned on the following points. The British Government considered that the position contemplated by the statement voluntarily and formally made by the American Commissioners at the opening of the Conference on March 8, 1871, had arisen. That statement amounted to an engagement that the indirect claims should not be put forward in the event of a treaty being agreed upon. But the Government did not rely merely upon that statement, or upon any other matter outside the text of the Treaty itself, as justifying that view; they relied on the words of the Treaty itself, which contained no reference to the indirect claims.

The American contention proved to be that their representatives had placed two alternatives before the Commission: first, an agreement for a gross sum to be paid by Great Britain in discharge of all the claims of the United States; secondly, arbitration before a competent tribunal; and that the waiving of the indirect claims was to be only contingent on the adoption of the first of these two alternatives. The British Commissioners and the British Government considered that an absolute waiver of the indirect claims had been offered under either alternative, and had been sufficiently secured by the terms of the Treaty.

'It was more than once urged on us by the American Commissioners [Sir Stafford Northcote wrote to Lord Granville] that the Senate, having taken the strong course of rejecting the Clarendon-Johnson Treaty, would have great difficulty in now accepting a treaty precisely similar, or similar in a very high degree, to that which they had previously disapproved. The language of the Treaty was studiously chosen, even in small and unimportant particulars, so as to make it as different as possible from its forerunner. Most probably the insertion of any words expressly and in terms barring the indirect claims would have excited the jealousy of the Senate, as seeming directly to reverse their former vote. At all events we believed that such was the impression of the American Commissioners, and we considered that they, whom we took to be thoroughly in earnest, were the best judges of what would be fatal to the adoption of the Treaty by the Senate. We abstained, therefore, from embarrassing them by pressing any such

words, contenting ourselves with such phraseology as we thought would effectually, though unostentatiously, bar the claims in question. I still think that the language is sufficient for that purpose, and I should not fear to submit it to the judgment of any competent tribunal. But to do so would be to admit that, if the Tribunal decided against us, we must be bound by its decision; and, as we certainly should refuse to be so bound, we ought not to allow the question to be submitted. I think we ought to rely upon the argument from intention. But in urging this argument, I think we ought frankly to admit that it is possible that the Americans may have taken throughout a different view of the proceedings from that which we took of them, and that they may have mistaken the motives of our reticence, and we the motives of theirs. It was a misfortune that we did not keep regular protocols *de die in diem*. Had we done so, the present misunderstanding could not have arisen, though perhaps the Treaty would not have been concluded, or if concluded would not have passed the Senate. It was, I think, an error of judgment for which we, the Commissioners, were certainly responsible. But, had we rejected the suggestion when made by the American Commissioners, and had we insisted on regular protocols against their opinion, we should have been told that we had upset the chance of a settlement by our own pedantry, and by our folly in refusing to listen to those who knew best the real mode of effecting one.'[1]

It was a source of strength to the Government at this critical moment that Lord Odo Russell was able to report from Berlin that the feeling in Germany was anti-American on the question at issue, although the belief there was that the American argument in regard to the indirect claims was so ill founded, that Great Britain need have no fear in going before the Tribunal and awaiting the award without apprehension as to the result.[2]

The period between the middle of January and June was spent in attempts to find a way out of the difficulty occasioned by the unexpected attitude of the American Government. 'A cool hand and a good temper are wanted.'[3] Thus in his diary wrote Mr. W. E. Forster, who had become a member of the Cabinet after his success in piloting the

[1] Sir Stafford Northcote to Lord Granville, April 7, 1872.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 16, November 16, 1872.
[3] *Life of W. E. Forster*, ii. 23.

Education Act of 1870 through the House of Commons, which his immediate chief Lord Ripon, aided by Lord Granville, had the almost equally difficult task of recommending to the House of Lords. Fortunately Lord Granville possessed the necessary qualities. A suggestion was first made that the difficulty should be got over by means of a supplemental article with a new rule by which the two countries should agree that the contentions of the British Government as to the inadmissibility of indirect claims should be accepted as the basis of the future conduct of the two nations in regard to similar claims, while the United States should be satisfied with a record that they adhered to the contention that the indirect claims were included in the original Treaty, but would yet consent to make no claim in respect of them at Geneva. The negotiation, however, to carry out this proposal which Lord Granville initiated advanced very slowly, partly owing to the premature publication of a draft article in America, partly owing to some alterations made in it by the Committee of Foreign Affairs of the American Senate, which seemed to change the meaning. It was evident, to say the least, that the exact terms of any arrangement must require very careful examination after what had passed.

'I infer [Lord Blachford wrote to Lord Granville] that the American Government are just as much alive to the enormity of their indirect claims as we are—that they do not dare to give them up themselves, but wish to ride off upon an adverse decision of the arbitrators, and that they in their own interests so settled the Treaty, or so intended to settle it, that they should have an answer to anyone who charged them with abandoning what the popular sentiment required them to maintain; while our Commissioners in our interests so settled the Treaty that, taken as a whole, it should carry an indirect renunciation of their claims. I suppose that the United States Government in prosecution of their desire to bamboozle their own people have availed themselves of the loophole that they have reserved (or think they have reserved); but that as this brings them into collision with the sense in which our Commissioners have settled the Treaty, the whole thing is blown up and the attempt to circumvent popular opinion fails.

'I suppose that diplomatists if let alone with *carte blanche* could even now settle the matter in ten minutes, and the moral I draw is this: if we leave diplomacy to diplomatists, we may get on as we have done hitherto—perhaps a little better. If we make arrangements for allowing mobs or Parliaments to negotiate with mobs or Parliaments we may *possibly* get on better, though I fear we should get on much worse. But if we are to have a mixture of open and close—mobs and Commissioners—we shall not get on at all. . . .'[1]

The American case had been lodged, and the English counter-case was to be presented on June 15 at Geneva. Meanwhile a storm of indignation was rapidly rising, and Lord Russell gave notice on April 22 that he would move an Address praying her Majesty to give instructions that all proceedings on behalf of her Majesty before the Geneva arbitrators be suspended, 'until the claims included in the case submitted on behalf of the United States, which are understood on the part of her Majesty not to be within the province of the arbitrators, be withdrawn.' The Government nevertheless decided to proceed with the presentation of the British case, subject to a protest and a reservation of the rights of her Majesty to retire from the arbitration, if the difference continued as to the scope and intention of the reference to the Tribunal. Meanwhile they reopened negotiations with the United States, though a successful issue at the time seemed well nigh hopeless, as public opinion was rapidly declaring itself against any further concession, and the majority of the Cabinet were in favour of accepting Lord Russell's resolution, if no other way out of the difficulty presented itself.[2]

Lord Granville, however, refused to abandon hope. In a despatch of February 3, addressed to General Schenck, the Minister of the United States in London, he explained the reasons which made it out of the question to consent to the Court at Geneva entertaining the indirect claims; and then, striking the higher note of great diplomacy, he urged 'the extreme importance' which the Government attached to the prosecution of the arbitration.

[1] Lord Blachford to Lord Granville, February 11, 1872.

[2] *Life of W. E. Forster*, ii. 23, 27.

'The primary object of the Governments on both sides was the firm establishment of amicable relations between two countries which have so many and such peculiar reasons to be on friendly terms, and the satisfaction with which the announcement of the Treaty was received by both nations showed the strength of this feeling.

'But there is another object to which her Majesty's Government believe the Government of the United States attach the same value as they do themselves, viz. to give an example to the world how two great nations can settle matters in dispute by referring them to an impartial tribunal.

'Her Majesty's Government on their part feel confident that the Government of the United States are also equally anxious with themselves that the amicable settlement which was stated in the Treaty of Washington to have been the object of that instrument, may be attained, and an example so full of good promise for the future should not be lost to the civilised world.'[1]

Lord Russell's resolution was discussed on June 3. The debate was damaging to the Government, as Lord Granville could make no definite statement. With considerable difficulty he obtained an adjournment until the 6th. But on the morning of the 6th no agreement had as yet been arrived at. The days of the Treaty now seemed numbered. Lord Granville nevertheless continued his negotiations with General Schenck in London. The basis now was an alternative plan which had been suggested by the latter almost simultaneously with the suggestion by Lord Granville of the additional clause, viz. that after an interchange of notes, Mr. Adams, the American member of the Tribunal, should himself withdraw the indirect claims at Geneva, and thus solve the difficulty. The suggestion, though not absolutely identical with that made by Lord Blachford, had this much in common with it, that it looked to some act at the Tribunal itself, rather than to any formal diplomatic agreement between the two countries, as affording the most likely solution of the diplomatic impasse.

The scene in the House of Lords on the evening of the 6th was of extreme interest. The issue was felt possibly to

[1] Lord Granville to General Schenck, February 3, 1872.

involve the fate of the Government, which was known to be much divided on the proper course to be pursued in the event of the indirect claims not being withdrawn. But the far more important question was present to every mind and hung on the lips of the audience, whether the great effort which had been made to remove the long-standing and permanent obstacle to good relations between Great Britain and the United States was at the last moment to be allowed to fail. Both sides of the House were crowded. The members of the House of Commons filled the bar. Diplomatists and Privy Councillors, conspicuous among whom were General Schenck and Sir Stafford Northcote, stood on the steps of the throne. One figure alone was missed. Lord Russell could not be seen. All eyes were fixed on Lord Granville. What course would he suggest? Lord Grey rose and suggested an adjournment, but made no motion. There was a pause, and at this moment, amid a silence that could be felt, the small but still erect form of Lord Russell was seen slowly entering the House. Lord Granville then rose, and with a smile on his face announced the receipt of a letter from General Schenck, which he said it was his intention to read. It ran as follows :—

'I am now authorised in a telegraphic despatch received to-day from Mr. Fish to say that the Government of the United States regards the new rule contained in the proposed article, as the consideration for and to be accepted as a settlement of the three classes of the indirect claims put forth in the case of the United States to which the Government of Great Britain have objected.' [1]

Lord Russell and Lord Cairns conferred together. There was another pause. Then very slowly Lord Russell rose and declared himself satisfied. Lord Cairns next concurred. A sign of relief ran round the assemblage. But Lord Derby, who throughout these troublesome days had risen entirely above party spirit and had thrown himself strongly on the side of sacrificing everything possible to maintaining the Treaty, expressed a doubt whether 'the supplemental article

[1] General Schenck to Lord Granville, June 6, 1872.

would have the effect to withdraw, put an end to, and set at rest those indirect claims,' even if read by the light of General Schenck's letter, for it had to be embodied in a treaty and to be approved by the Senate.[1] Until such approval had taken place, it could not be said that agreement existed or that the indirect claims were finally and completely done with.

The words of General Schenck's letter, it had to be admitted, were far from clear, and the more closely it was examined, the more it was seen only to contain some intimation not of the clearest kind as to the withdrawal of the claims at Geneva, and not expressly to preclude the matter being brought up at a future date. Although, therefore, the risk of defeat in Parliament had been escaped, the Cabinet on the morning of June 15 felt no absolute security even as to what might happen that day at Geneva, and what the exact nature of the action of Mr. Charles Francis Adams might prove to be. On his action both in substance and in form all depended. At Versailles and Paris little less than a century before—in 1782—the lineal ancestor of the American member of the Tribunal, by boldly separating himself and his colleague Mr. Jay from the dictation of Benjamin Franklin and the French Ministers, had saved from failure the negotiations for the recognition by England of the independence of the revolted colonies, and thus secured peace.[2] His grandson at Geneva now took an equally memorable and patriotic course when he decided to be a party to the withdrawal of the indirect claims from the cognisance of the Tribunal.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

16 BRUTON STREET, LONDON, W.,
*June* 12, 1872.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—We are on the eve of a probable and satisfactory settlement of the Alabama question.

'The arbitrators will on Wednesday declare *extra-judicially* that on the reading of the American case, counter-case, and summary of arguments, they are individually and collectively convinced that the indirect claims are untenable, and cannot be entertained by them.

'As this course has been secretly prompted by Adams and Evarts,

[1] *Hansard*, ccxi. 1265, 1266. [2] *Life of Shelburne*, iii. 293.




"WAITING FOR THE VERDICT."

1. Mr. Goschen
2. Mr. Cardwell
3. Mr. H. A. Bruce
4. Duke of Argyll
5. Marquess of Ripon
6. Marquess of Hartington
7. Viscount Halifax
8. Earl of Kimberley
9. Mr. Gladstone
10. Earl Granville
11. Mr. W. E. Forster
12. Lord Hatherley
13. Mr. Stansfeld

and the words of the declaration settled by Evarts and R. Palmer, the Americans will probably agree to withdraw the indirect claims, and then all cause of difference will disappear.

'Please keep this *secret*. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

These hopes were not disappointed. The arbitrators immediately on assembling on June 15 announced through their President their unanimous decision that in no circumstances did they intend to entertain the indirect claims, even if placed before them, and the American agents then formally withdrew them from the cognisance of the Tribunal. It was one of the great moments of history. The Cabinet were sitting in London in something like permanent session on that fateful day, and in the pages of the diary of Mr. W. E. Forster there is a living record of the anxieties of those few hours.

'*June* 15.—Cabinet at 12. Arbitration meeting at Geneva to-day, and we waited for news. From 12 to 2 on parliamentary business; then adjourned to 3, some of us lunching meantime with Granville at Foreign Office. No telegram with real news; a telegram taking nearly four hours sent off by Tenterden at 11.30 before the meeting. Again an adjournment to 5.30. Still no telegram. We had exhausted subjects of talk, and were listlessly looking at one another.

'"The Opposition would snigger if they saw us," said Granville; and, soon after, he said to me, "I wonder whether West has a chess-board?" disappeared, and brought it to me wrapped up in a handkerchief; and we took three chairs on to the terrace outside the Cabinet room, one for each of us and one for the chess-board. We had three games, and, alas! he won two of them. Still no telegram, and we went off to dinner, with agreement that we should be summoned to Halifax's when it came. . . . Called at Halifax's; still no news; went on to Lady Ripon's; no news there; Schenck had an early telegram with nothing in. On our return we called at the Foreign Office with Glyn, but they knew nothing.

'*June* 16, *Sunday*.—A cab soon after breakfast with telegram from Tenterden, saying little except that arbitration had adjourned till Monday. I thought, however, from its tone that probably Adams would try to move out the indirect claims, and, after church and early dinner, I went off to Granville to say this and urge help to Adams. His footman told me he was gone some time ago to a Cabinet at Mr. Gladstone's. I went on, and found they had been at it for nearly two hours. Somehow or other the messenger had missed me.

My expectation was fully justified—a confidential telegram from Tenterden saying that Adams was then moving. We sent a short helpful telegram. Q——only really opposing. I was in time somewhat to alter it. Granville drove me off in high glee, calling at the Foreign Office to see Harcourt. After all, this Treaty, which has as many lives as a cat, will live.'[1]

'You appear to have saved the coach in the act of upsetting,'[2] Lord Granville wrote to Lord Tenterden, the British Agent to the Commission.

'I presume [he wrote at the same time to Sir Roundell Palmer] it is almost certain that the American Government will sufficiently acquiesce in the declaration of the Tribunal, to enable us to proceed. They will probably hold the language that they have succeeded in getting everything they want. "They never expected to get money, but they desired an opinion from a majority of the arbitrators against the principle of claims which, admissible under the Treaty, it was nevertheless of the last importance to them should for the future be extinguished." The unanimous decision of the arbitrators, even without hearing what could be said on the other side, was most satisfactory.

'Disraeli behaved very well the other night, and as no effectual blow will be possible, will probably abstain from directing many ineffectual hits at us.

'I am sanguine in the belief that the public will recognise, as much as the Cabinet, the remarkable skill with which the declaration of the Tribunal was drawn.'[3]

A full statement of what happened at Geneva was made by Lord Granville on June 27 in the House of Lords.[4] Hardly, however, had the diplomatic complications of the situation been removed, before difficulties arose during the proceedings at Geneva due to the personal character of some of the members of the Tribunal. The apparent want of impartiality on the part of M. Staempfli, the Swiss member of the Tribunal, was the chief cause of these.

'. . . From the pertinacious manner [Lord Tenterden wrote from Geneva] in which M. Staempfli finds excuses for deciding against

[1] *Life of W. E. Forster*, ii. 31.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Tenterden, July 30, 1872.
[3] Lord Granville to Sir Roundell Palmer, June 22, 1872.
[4] *Hansard*, ccxii. 260.

England, and the ignorant rough and ready way in which he gives judgment without a pretence of waiting to hear argument, one would be led to believe that he had some motive for hostility to England. I have, however, no proof of it. He certainly has managed to overdo the part, and when opinions and judgments are published he will probably be severely criticised—to which he is most likely profoundly indifferent . . .'[1]

It was a far more serious matter that the deportment of the British arbitrator, the Lord Chief Justice, was not beyond criticism. Sir Alexander Cockburn was a great jurist and lawyer, a brilliant linguist and an eloquent orator.

'Few men possessed a higher estimate of the capabilities of the language, or bestowed greater care on all the products of his mind. Whether it was a charge, or a summing up, or a judgment, a letter to the press, or an after-dinner speech, all alike received from him a polish that might be called classical. Inspired by the traditions of the distinguished office which he held, he never allowed anything to pass from his lips or his pen that was not worthy of "the silver-tongued Murray."'[2]

To such a character the proceedings of M. Staempfli, both in substance and in form, were gall and wormwood, especially as the Lord Chief Justice abhorred the Treaty itself, agreed with Lord Russell's criticisms, not to mention contributing many of his own, and did not conceal that 'if he had been a member of the Government he would certainly have resigned rather than sign it.'[3]

'Things have gone badly with us here [he wrote to Lord Granville]. I saw from our first sitting in July that they would. We could not have had a worse man than Staempfli—or next to him than the President. The first a furious Republican, hating monarchical government, and ministries in which men of rank take part, ignorant as a horse and obstinate as a mule. The second vapid, and all anxiety to give a decision which shall produce an effect in the world, and to make speeches about "civilisation," "humanity," &c. &c., in short *un vrai phrasier*. Baron Itajuba is of a far better stamp, but not sufficiently informed and very indolent; and apt by reason of the

[1] Lord Tenterden to Lord Granville, August 1, 1872.
[2] *Academy*, November 27, 1880, No. 447.
[3] Sir Alexander Cockburn to Lord Granville, August 25, 1872.

latter defect to catch hold of some salient point without going to the bottom of things, with the further defect of clinging to an opinion once formed with extreme tenacity.'[1]

'What is the matter with your arbitrator?' was the warning note which came from Geneva, and from a friendly pen, very shortly after the sittings had commenced for actual business. 'He acts as if he was possessed. Last week he insulted the rest of us, one at a time, but to-day he insulted us all in a bunch. Does he yet mean to break up the Treaty?' 'The effect thus far is very damaging to our cause,' Lord Tenterden plainly told Lord Granville.[2] Sir Alexander Cockburn in a word considered the American claims excessive, and that their advocacy had been unscrupulous. He looked on the conduct of M. Staempfli as unjudicial and bearing evident marks of partiality and prejudice. He considered most of his colleagues incompetent; and these feelings he was also entirely unable to conceal. The result was that the coach was again in danger of being upset.

LORD GRANVILLE TO SIR ALEXANDER COCKBURN.

BRUTON STREET, *August* 21, 1872.

'MY DEAR COCKBURN,—I have read what you have sent of your judgment with great admiration. It is written with a clearness almost peculiar to yourself. It is as pleasant to read, and as easy to understand, as a novel.

'I regret, however, that you should have thought it necessary to preface it with an attack upon the Treaty, the negotiations, and the Government similar to that which Cairns has already made.

'As you never liked the Treaty, it was natural that to blame it should occur to you. But the Treaty was accepted by the country, and the nation as well as the Government were much relieved by its being saved the other day; and although I have of course a bias, yet I cannot refrain from saying that if, as it is possible, we may have to pay even more than what Lord Stanley[3] intimated he always expected we should have to pay under arbitration, yet it would be

[1] Sir Alexander Cockburn to Lord Granville, August 25, 1872.

[2] Lord Tenterden to Lord Granville, August 1, 1872.

[3] Lord Derby is here meant. The allusion is to the negotiation with Mr. Reverdy Johnson mentioned earlier in the chapter.

as great a want of dignity to make any public complaint of the tools we made, as it would be to do so of the foreign workmen who have been asked by us to use them.

'Your judgment will be a most important State Paper read by the ablest men in all the world. It does not appear to me to be congruous that England's representative should throw dirt upon her Government and its diplomatic representatives. And I do not see what public object is gained, and how your admirable argument is helped by it.

'I have examined myself closely to see whether I am influenced by my own interest in the matter, and I am convinced that if the case was reversed, and that it concerned a great Conservative judge, known to disapprove of certain persons and certain things connected with a Disraeli Government, with some of whom he had had recent hostile passages, I should be of exactly the same opinion.

'You and I would both regret that our common friends and foes should say, "How clever of Cockburn in his great judgment to have contrived to give a backhander to Gladstone, his people, and his Chancellor!"

'Nothing but our long intimacy justifies me in writing on this subject to you—without it this note would be an impertinence. But I am certain you will not mind my having done so, and I hope you will consider whether there is not something in what I suggest.

'My colleagues have not seen any of your paper.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Sir Alexander Cockburn fortunately took Lord Granville's remonstrances in good part.

'I certainly owe nothing to Mr. Gladstone [he replied]; but, my dear Lord, if I owe Mr. Gladstone nothing, I owe you a great deal for the unvarying kindness and friendship you have shown me for many years, and any wish of yours can only be met by a hearty desire on my part to give effect to it.'[1]

And he consented, in reply to Lord Granville's appeals to modify materially what he had written on the provisions of the Treaty in the judgment he was engaged in drawing up.

The waters of the diplomatic lake at Geneva were indeed rough and broken, but at length the ship of arbitration struggled through them. The main award was against

[1] Sir Alexander Cockburn to Lord Granville, August 25, 1872.

Great Britain, and amounted to 3,229,166*l.* Sir Alexander Cockburn recorded his opinion in an elaborate protest embodied in a report of September 14, 1872, which was presented to Parliament in 1873 with the award and papers relating to the arbitration. He agreed with the arbitrators as to the Alabama, but arrived at his conclusion on grounds different from theirs. In the case of the Shenandoah he entirely absolved the British Government. In that of the Florida the want of due diligence was in his opinion not sufficiently proved.

'When I undertook the office of arbitrator [he wrote to Lord Granville], I believed that the only question would be whether her Majesty's Government had by any oversight or omission, failed to fulfil the obligation admitted by the Treaty of Washington to have been binding on it. When I found that with a view to a favourable decision on this question charges involving the honour and good faith of the Queen's Government and the country were put forward in the pleadings of the United States, and saw plainly that these charges were unfounded and unjust, I thought it my duty not to pass them over in silence.'[1]

In a more impartial spirit Lord Tenterden summed up the results.

LORD TENTERDEN TO LORD GRANVILLE.

GENEVA, *September* 8, 1872.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Many thanks for your kind letter of the 5th. It is encouraging to hear that you think we have done our best. The real fact is that from the moment we agreed to go to arbitration (and, as you know, I am sure that it was a good policy to do so) we wilfully submitted ourselves to be judged by a form of opinion on these questions of International Law widely different from our own. We rest upon precedent and the practice of English and American Courts of Law. To us the *dicta* of Stowell and Story seem something sacred. To a foreigner our legal procedure seems cumbrous, and the strict regard for following up the prosecution until there is sufficient evidence to lead to an assured conviction is unintelligible. To make use of a simile, which I dare say your sporting experiences will bring home to you, he cannot understand why the greyhound, when out coursing, should follow the hare

[1] Sir Alexander Cockburn to Lord Granville, October 4, 1872.

accurately through every twist and turn and not run into her at once.

'In a matter such as we have had to deal with, it is difficult to say whether the foreigner is right or not. To those who, like myself, have been in the thick of the contest, he appears at the time to be ridiculously in the wrong. We cannot understand his view of the case, which seems to us to be ignorantly superficial. He cannot understand ours, which seems to him to be illogical and contrary to the general doctrine of principles laid down in the Continental confession of faith in legal affairs—the Code Napoléon. Probably we are both of us wrong in one direction or the other.

'In the present instance it may prove to have been a good thing for both countries and for the world in general to have had recourse to a tribunal; the members of which derived their views from a source so widely differing from the one which we have been accustomed to revere as the only fountain of knowledge.

'As a personal question, we have found the arbitrators to be very commonplace people; and the difficulty arising from the countries applied to having named persons ignorant of English, has of course been very great. Looking back calmly over the whole proceedings now that they are over, I venture to think that the advantages of a tribunal composed of a certain number of known persons with a sense of personal responsibility are not inconsiderable; one neutralises the other. If a Sovereign had been selected, he would in turn have nominated some one to get up the case for him; and what security should we have had that it might not have been some so-styled jurist like Coloos, the Spaniard, who in his second volume of *History of International Law* (just published), after a long chapter on the Alabama claims, arrived at almost an identical opinion with the arbitrators?

'I confess that for myself I had never expected to win on the Alabama, was doubtful of the Florida (which depends on a technical definition of commissioning and "deposit of offence"), and, as I told you some time ago, had fears for the Shenandoah on account of the recruiting at Melbourne. But, supposing that the case was to be given against us, the award is certainly moderate. Had it not been for my Brazilian friend, it might (and probably would) have been at least another million and a half of pounds sterling. As it is, the amount as an indemnity for individual losses is very little more than, if so much as, we should have had to pay under a reference to assessors; and the allowance of interest, which constitutes a third of it, is well borne out by the precedents of previous arbitrations and commissioners. I have written you a

despatch in which I have attempted to show how the award has been arrived at, and what a fight we made to reduce it. If you think it clear enough, it may be useful for publication.

'I have felt it my duty to let you know everything that has passed —to bring you, as it were, within the circle of our own feeling at Geneva—and in doing so I may perhaps have made the arbitration (when writing under sombre feelings of irritation or disappointment with the Tribunal) seem to have gone off worse than it has. If so, I know that it is better to state the worst at once, and you will excuse me if it turns out a greater success than I have led you to believe. We must not consider it a failure because there is an outcry (should there be one) at having anything to pay. Sclopis had drawn up a windy judgment, full of errors and most dangerous in doctrine; but the Brazilian has drawn up a counter-project, which has been adopted, which is written in a business-like style and will do no discredit to the Tribunal. I am constantly being worried to give an opinion as to what I think of the judgment, but as constantly evade the inquiry. The Brazilian is always trying to get me to say something, but now that the affair is finished I keep carefully out of his way. Adams always tries to pump me. Davis is very morose and discontented in appearance—I think he is disgusted with the rejection of the pursuit and capture claims.[1]

'I went with Sir Roundell to a dinner given by the Geneva Council of State last night. He thought we could not refuse. I have managed by means of Davis, who is nervous of speaking French in public, to get the speech-making cut down to a speech to Sclopis, and a speech (which he carries about ready written with him) from Sclopis, at both the public entertainments we have been to. I hope to be equally successful at Berne, where I go (as the Chief Justice won't) on Thursday. I am writing from the mountains, where I have retired for a day or two out of the way. 'Yours sincerely,

'TENTERDEN.'

In the negotiations of which the history has in this chapter been related, the qualities with which the reader is already familiar in Lord Granville, an almost unlimited patience, temper, and courtesy, were conspicuous throughout. Without them the Washington Treaty would have perished, and the Geneva arbitration would have been abortive. But there was something more than these qualities. The firmness of Lord Granville, to which Sir Stafford Northcote bore such

[1] Mr. Bancroft Davis was the agent of the United States.

conspicuous testimony in resisting at the outset the extreme demands of the American Commissioners, and his determination later on not to allow himself to be diverted from the attainment of the main object of the negotiation by any secondary considerations, insured success when failure would otherwise have been certain. The demands of the American Commissioners at Washington were frequently galling both in substance and in form. The arguments adduced at home against judging past events by *ex post facto* legislation were in themselves technically unanswerable. The revival of the indirect claims after they had been abandoned by the United States was unjustifiable, and would have afforded a complete legal and moral justification for retiring from the arbitration altogether. But beyond the mountains of difficulty lay the supreme end: there lay the 'dark tower' which blocked the path of friendly relations between Great Britain and the United States; and in order to reach and destroy it, Lord Granville considered it was worth while to endure long and to suffer much. In comparison with this object, all else was comparatively unimportant. Popularity there was none to be gained. A proud nation, still largely imbued with the traditions of the days of Lord Palmerston, and with influential classes still animated by an unreasonable and bitter dislike of the United States, consented but unwillingly to be dragged before an international tribunal without precedent in the history of nations, and under circumstances in which, on the main issue at least, the judgment was certain to be adverse. The biographer of Lord Russell claims, and correctly claims, that the voice of the nation in June 1872 was with him rather than with Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville.[1] Sir Alexander Cockburn's protest was far more widely read than the judgment of the Tribunal; and in the long indictment of the Liberal Government in 1874 there can be little doubt that, although in this respect the recognised leaders of the Conservative party stand blameless, the average British elector made the Geneva award one of the principal counts in the indictment which

[1] Walpole, *Life of Lord Russell*, ii. 365.

caused him to record his vote against the Government. The Treaty of Washington and the Geneva arbitration are in fact to be added to the list of those cases where Governments have been wiser than the nations which they governed.

In England the Treaty was accepted without enthusiasm as at best an unwelcome necessity. The award itself was bound to be unpopular. It became all the more so when the San Juan question, which had been made matter of separate reference to the German Emperor, was decided in favour of the United States. The Treaty of Washington had itself settled the disputed points in the Fishery question in a sense unfavourable to Canada. The only real set-off to these British defeats was found—but this did not appear till some time afterwards—in the large award made by the Tribunal appointed under the Treaty in respect of claims by British subjects for illegal captures during the Civil War by American cruisers; and by the result of the arbitration as to the value of the Canadian fisheries, which, greatly to the disappointment of American opinion, adjudged Canada a sum amounting to more than 1,000,000*l.* sterling.

The appeal of the British Government had to be made to the judgment of the future rather than to that of the living generation; to the voice of reason and not to the clamour of the streets; and to the suffrages of posterity rather than to the ballot boxes, which at the next general election were for the first time to be consulted under the Act for secret voting. This measure, bitterly opposed and rejected in the House of Lords in 1871, had with difficulty struggled into existence in the same session in which the Geneva award was given. It contained the death sentence of the Liberal Government, a fact still concealed from the gaze of the Opposition peers, who might otherwise have viewed it with a more friendly eye.

During the debates on the Ballot Bill the latent capacity for quietly and suddenly dealing an effective but unexpected thrust, which distinguished Lord Granville, caused one of his utterances to become in June 1872 the occasion of a famous scene, and of the reading by the Clerk at the table,

for the first time in the memory of those then living, of the ancient standing order of the House of Lords of June 12 and 13, 1662, relating to 'asperity of speech.' The House being in Committee, Lord Granville had dexterously avoided defeat from the overwhelming forces of the Conservative peers by unexpectedly leading his followers into the lobby in support of an amendment moved by Lord Shaftesbury for extending the polling hours at elections to an hour later than that named in the Bill. In the House of Commons the Government had resisted a similar amendment, not upon the merits but in order not to over-weight the Bill, especially in the face of certain and successful opposition to any such proposal in the Lords. When, therefore, Lord Shaftesbury moved the same amendment, they again resisted it. Great, therefore, was their astonishment when they found that a large section of the Opposition, apparently with the connivance of their leader, the Duke of Richmond, was about to vote for it, in order to add one more to the numerous rebuffs already experienced that evening by the Government, thinking probably that another defeat, no matter how inflicted, would wreck the Bill. It was not clear that the Duke of Richmond himself apprehended how such conduct would strike the ordinary observer. Lord Granville—as the Government had expressed approval in both Houses of the amendment in principle—with admirable presence of mind swiftly carried all his followers with him into the 'Aye' lobby with the Conservative peers, and the amendment was thus added to the Bill by an immense majority, to the disgust of the Conservative leader, who expected to have seen Lord Granville go into the 'No' lobby. A sharp discussion immediately ensued. The Duke of Richmond having by this time discovered that 'the counsel of Ahithophel had been turned into foolishness,' was heard protesting against the Liberal leader's conduct.

'Noble Lords opposite [Lord Granville retorted], with the enormous power they wield in the House—am I saying anything which is not true?—noble Lords opposite are so accustomed to have their own way in matters of this sort, that they cannot conceive any

course being taken except for us to vote and be beaten on every amendment they propose. What is there unfair in what we have done? Putting all other questions aside, it comes to this, that if the noble Duke of Richmond had known more clearly than he seems to have done the line of voting we should take, he should have been able to exercise his influence on members of his own party *in order to prevent them from voting in the way they thought right.*'[1]

This barbed observation caused a general fray of so bitter and prolonged a character that it was only ended by the solemn reading of the Standing Order by the Clerk on the motion of an indignant peer. Lord Granville probably considered that the conduct of the Tory peers had not been in keeping with what was usual in good society. He was credited with once having observed in reply to somebody who had said he was a Radical, that it might be true, but that he was 'a Radical who happened to like good society;' and he no doubt expected good society to behave as such in the House of Lords, of which he never forgot he was the leader, even if his own party was the minority in it.[2]

Early in 1873 Mr. Gladstone was defeated in the House of Commons on a Bill for the reorganisation of University Education in Ireland. He resigned and then resumed office, Mr. Disraeli having declined to form an Administration. 'I would have been glad,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Odo Russell, 'of a little rest and holiday before getting too old to enjoy them; but it has seemed better otherwise to the gods.'[3]

The condition of Europe at this moment did not spell rest for the Foreign Secretary. The Franco-Prussian War had alienated both the late belligerents from Great Britain, and the constant ill-will of Russia, so strikingly evidenced during the Washington negotiations, had to be reckoned with. The Czar, so Lord Odo Russell informed Lord Granville, when on a visit to Berlin had said that he had made a special study of the institutions and policy of Great

[1] *Hansard*, ccxi. 1839.
[2] Obituary notice in *Le Journal de la Meurthe*, 3 Avril, 1891.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, March 19, 1873.

Britain, and that he had convinced himself of the danger to which European Governments would be exposed by following her 'downward course.' The Czar also felt it his duty to utter a warning note to the Royal Family of Germany, because 'the sacred cause of Royalty must suffer from any imitation of the pernicious example given by the growing Republicanism and Socialism of England. Germany, Austria, and Russia should hold together to resist those dangerous and evil influences of England, if order was to be maintained in Europe.' [1]

Prince Bismarck told Lord Odo Russell in May that he wanted peace to carry out his policy. That policy, the Ambassador said, was 'the supremacy of Germany in Europe, and of the German race in the world.' [2] At home he was meditating a departure from the policy of Free Trade, which had as its main stay the presence in office of Dr. Rudolf von Delbrück, who since 1859 had been Prince Bismarck's right hand on all commercial questions, and had in 1862 negotiated with France a treaty which obtained for the then existing Zollverein the same commercial treatment as that accorded to Great Britain and Belgium on a basis of reduced duties. This treaty was the model of all the other treaties which had been subsequently negotiated, and any change of policy required peace in order to carry it through.

As long as M. Thiers was President of the French Republic, Prince Bismarck believed that he could rely on quiet.[3] But on May 26, 1873, M. Thiers fell from power, and Marshal MacMahon became President of the Republic. Two rival tendencies—both of which had helped to compass the fall of M. Thiers—at once began to assert themselves. The triumph of either, Prince Bismarck believed, would be fatal to peace. On the one hand stood the clerical and military parties, which hoped to dominate the Marshal and force him into supporting the Pope against Italy and incidentally against Germany, then still involved in the

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 9, 1872.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 10, 1873.
[3] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, February 19, 1873.

Kulturkampf. On the other hand was the extreme democratic party, which Prince Bismarck believed to be incapable of governing at all, and to be certain to make Paris the centre of a revolutionary propaganda. Although, therefore, the payment of the war indemnity and the consequent evacuation of the territory were being loyally carried out by France, the attitude of Prince Bismarck had again become watchful and apprehensive, and even before the fall of M. Thiers he had begun to look around for alliances. The immediate care of German statesmanship if war is apprehended on the western frontier is to insure the eastern frontier against attack; and a meeting of the three Emperors held at Berlin in the autumn of 1872 had been the first step in this direction. It was followed by a visit of the Emperor William, accompanied by Prince Bismarck himself, to St. Petersburg in April 1873, and overtures to Italy were made to join the common understanding.

In September, King Victor Emmanuel visited the Emperor at Berlin. These meetings, Prince Bismarck told Lord Odo Russell in a curious and characteristic conversation, were 'a pledge of peace—he was determined it should be so; but it was curious how little those three potentates [referring to the three Emperors] really knew of the arts of peace, of the wants of their subjects, or of modern legislation;' and he complained, not only of France and the Pope, but as usual, and with extreme bitterness, of the constant intrigues carried on against him by some of his colleagues, which he traced to the Empress Augusta.[1] The Ambassador thought that he might after all be only preparing public opinion for the reception of an unpopular Army Bill, which required a general impression of 'danger to the Fatherland.'[2] The

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, September 21, 1872; Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, October 9, 1872.

[2] 'Le Prince de Bismarck s'efforçait partout de grouper les sympathies, les rapprochements, les démonstrations cordiales, autour de la nouvelle Allemagne; il était en coquetterie avec l'Europe entière, il s'ingéniait à attirer, à promettre, à s'entremettre: il faisait entendre sur tous les points sa sérénade.' *Revue d'Histoire Diplomatique*, No. 2, p. 267, 1905: 'Présidence du Maréchal Macmahon,' par le Comte d'Antioche. *Histoire de la France Contemporaine*, par Gabriel Hanotaux, vol. ii. ch. iii.

apprehension of the leaders of the National party in the German Parliament was that Prince Bismarck was likely to be paving the way for a war which would not only humiliate France, but enable him 'to sweep away the small States' of Germany also.[1]

More outspoken, however, and far more ominous than the words of Prince Bismarck was the language of Count Moltke, who at a great State banquet on March 1 told the Ambassador that the idea of war was popular; that it must come sooner or later; and regarded from the military point of view, the sooner the better. Prince Bismarck himself, although he desired peace, believed in war being forced on by France; and his recent visit to Russia had, he said, been intended to awe France if possible into keeping the peace, and to dispel M. Thiers' illusions in regard to a Franco-Russian alliance. But although 'he had made his alliance with Russia, Prince Bismarck would be glad,' the Ambassador went on to say, 'to be on intimate terms with us.' He told Lord Odo Russell how much he desired the support of Great Britain against 'the common enemy.' An alliance between Great Britain and France was, in his opinion, 'an unnatural alliance' between naturally 'inimical races;' and the Ambassador everywhere noticed 'an increased cordiality and civility, from the Imperial Family to the man in the street, and an ever repeated desire for friendship.' Prince Bismarck also himself on more than one occasion complained of 'his Imperial master for resisting the introduction of a system of administration under a responsible Premier as in England, which he, Prince Bismarck, considered the best method of developing the education of the Germans, and teaching them the art of self-government.'[2] The understanding between Russia, Germany, and Austria-Hungary, he impressed on the Ambassador, was 'real, intimate, and sincere;' but why should it be inconsistent with an understanding with Great Britain? France had nothing to offer Germany; but Great Britain 'could offer Germany Heligoland' and a reduction of the spirit duties, instead of

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, January 31, February 8, 1873.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 16, 1872; January 11, February 8, 11, March 2, 22, May 10, 1873.

wasting time on a commercial treaty with France, the proposals in regard to which were regarded by ill-informed persons in Germany as a reply to the meeting of the Emperors in Berlin.[1]

All these fears, feelings, and suspicions were roused into fresh activity by the fall of M. Thiers, and by the violence of the clerical press in France, headed by the *Univers*, then edited by M. Veuillot. By the end of the year Italy had joined the Drei-Kaiserbund in a bond of insurance against a possible attack by France. 'The greatest satisfaction prevails here in Berlin,' Lord Odo Russell wrote, 'at the alliance between Germany, Austria, Russia, and Italy, which is looked upon as a guarantee of peace, and as a safeguard against a war of Franco-Royal revenge.'[2]

The Ambassador at this time paid a visit to Paris. At the house of Count Arnim, then German Ambassador, he met M. Thiers, who, while evidently looking forward to his own return to power, spoke on the assumption of almost anything being possible, even an Imperial restoration and his own acceptance of it. Incidentally he spoke very severely of the conduct of the Princes of the House of Orleans. Years before the Princesse de Lieven had said, 'These Princes are never anywhere except where they have no business to be;'[3] and M. Thiers now told his audience that the great blunder the Princes had made after the war, was in coming to France. He had told them that in their case the old proverb would be reversed, and that it would be 'the absent who would prove to be right;' and he contrasted in this respect the attitude of quiet dignity adopted by the Empress Eugénie in her exile with the constant attempts of the Princes to attract attention.[4]

Count Bismarck's conversation confirmed the view which Lord Granville held, that he was 'a greater danger to the peace of Europe' than even the condition of France and the violence of the clerical party.[5]

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 15, June 21, 1873.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 1, 1873.
[3] *La Princesse de Lieven*, par Ernest Daudet, p. 83.
[4] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 18, 1873.
[5] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, Christmas 1873.

'My own impression is [he wrote to Lord Odo Russell] that if things are left to take their own course, England, Germany, Austria, and Italy will from common interest, and from religious sympathies as regards England and Germany, act together. But if Germany was to begin a purely aggressive war, I doubt whether anyone could answer for the feeling in this country.'

These considerations the Ambassador was directed to urge with his utmost strength.[1] The Queen, by the advice of Lord Granville, in the hope of staying the peril to European peace, also made a personal appeal to the German Emperor. Accounts, this letter said, had reached her of the excitement in both Germany and France; and although she did not desire to attach an exaggerated importance to them, they yet gave 'some cause of anxiety to those who ardently desired the maintenance of peace.' The Queen's belief was that,

'although a successful soldier, the Emperor was animated with the same wish as her Majesty for peace; that he was aware of her Majesty's personal devotion to him and his family, her devotion to Germany, and her satisfaction that by means of his glorious victories the union of Germany had been effected. Nothing was now wanting to the prestige of Germany but to show herself as magnanimous in peace as she was invincible in war. Her Majesty had observed with pleasure the gradual but steady growth of respect and regard in this country for Germany, and the increased sense of the importance of good relations between two countries whose interests and whose feelings have so much in common. Although there is an active Catholic minority, the country is essentially Protestant, and its sympathies would be with Germany in any difference with France, unless there was an appearance on the part of Germany of an intention to avail herself of her greatly superior force to crush a beaten foe. There could be no doubt of the issue of a second war between France and Germany, but it was not so clear what effect another great war might have upon some of the most dangerous social questions of the day.'[2]

The Queen went on to say that she well knew how provocative some of the language in the French press and in

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, December 31, 1873.
[2] Draft among Lord Granville's papers, 1874.

the French pulpits had been; but it was the nature of the French to be a little boastful, and threats of revenge were as common in 1815 as they have lately been: yet many years of peace ensued, without an attempt to fulfil their menaces. In January 1873 the French Government had prosecuted M. Veuillot; and the *Univers* was suspended for two months. The Queen was accordingly able to point out that the French Government appeared to try to do all it possibly could 'to curb the religious fanaticism of the clergy;' and to express her belief that all classes in France were convinced that they had not the power, and therefore would not have the will for years to come to attempt an aggression on their neighbours. 'The Queen,' the letter concluded, 'had confidence in the judgment and moderation of the Emperor in these circumstances.'

'Münster will speak to you [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Odo Russell early in 1874] in the same conciliatory sense as he did to me. I hope the crisis is over for the present, and the German Parliament will now occupy Bismarck's attention more than foreign affairs.'[1]

The clouds for the moment rolled by; but it was for a time only, and in 1875 under still graver circumstances another appeal had to be made to the judgment and moderation of the Emperor, but Lord Granville was then no longer at the Foreign Office.

A partial Ministerial reorganisation in the autumn took place, but the situation remained substantially unaltered. There was not only a Conservative reaction; but, what was far more serious, Mr. Gladstone felt himself getting more and more out of harmony with a large section of his own followers on Church and educational questions. Early in 1874 the Cabinet suddenly decided to put an end to the condition of uncertainty in which they had stood since their defeat on the Dublin University Bill, by an immediate appeal to the country coupled with a proposal to take advantage of the prosperity of the national finances in order to abolish the

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, February 7, 1874.

income tax. But the proposal—striking as it was—failed to win over the electorate, and the Government again resigned. Mr. Disraeli became Prime Minister a second time; and for the first time in his long career found himself at the head of a majority in the House of Commons.

Lord Granville was able to hand over the care of the Foreign Office to Lord Derby under favourable conditions. The permanent obstacle to the existence of good relations between Great Britain and the United States had been removed, and Europe was at peace.

'I have not the heart to write this last day [Lord Odo Russell told his chief]. In leaving office you have the satisfaction to know that you have calmed down Bismarck in regard to France, and that all looks pacific and serene here again; and that our relations with Germany were never better, more cordial, or more satisfactory than at present.' [1]

The Ambassador's letter found the ex-Foreign Secretary in cheerful mood.

'When the first bitterness of defeat was over, you cannot conceive [he said] how pleasant it is to be without the "lumbering of the wheels." I look at a few empty red boxes, and say, "D——n the parade!"' [2]

Some details of the circumstances which led to the sudden dissolution of 1874 will be found in the following extracts from the letters written at this time by Lord Granville to Lady Granville.

18 Carlton House Terrace, *January* 18, 1874.

'Soon after writing to you yesterday I went to the Travellers'—dined between the Duke of Cambridge and Charles Clifford. In the evening played four!!!! games at chess with Solvyns two and two; then a pool at écarté with Solvyns, Harry Howard, and Leo Ellis. . . . The plot is thickening very much—a possible break up, or, what is more likely, an immediate dissolution.'

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, February 24, 1874.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, February 27, 1874.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *January* 19, 1874.

'Bright, Goschen, Cardwell, and I were to meet at Gladstone's this morning on the question of reducing estimates, and the first Cabinet takes place at three in the afternoon. Both very ticklish affairs. Wolverton and Godley have just been here to say that G. is in bed, and not allowed to speak, but wishing both meetings to go on and I to represent him. It is very awkward.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *January* 21, 1874.

'Only time to say that Gladstone insists on my remaining in town for some days, over Saturday and Sunday. We have been going over his letter to the Queen, asking her permission to propose to the Cabinet on Friday to dissolve on Monday next. He has written an excellent manifesto.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *January* 22, 1874.

'My short note of yesterday was like a telegraphic message—very meagre, but yet taking all the cream out of the milk. Unless you hear to the contrary, on Sunday afternoon you may, *swearing* him to secrecy, tell Davey that on Monday Parliament will be dissolved, Gladstone proposing by economy, and by a readjustment of some of the existing taxes helping this large surplus, to abolish the income tax and the local rates, and relieve the people from some indirect taxation. Davey *must not* breathe a word of it till Monday morning; but it may help him to prepare summons, &c. &c. The Queen, you see, takes your side.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *January* 22, 1874.

'A very busy day. A great deal with Bright, Gladstone, and with Halifax. There is a chance of our having things sufficiently arranged to announce them on Saturday, in which case I will telegraph to you to send for the faithful Davey at once. But the Queen, who writes by post, may object.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *January* 23, 1874.

'The Queen assents, and I presume the Cabinet will, so send for Davey this evening. Give him my message, which he is not, however, to communicate till to-morrow morning. If the Cabinet objects, I will telegraph to you before six o'clock.'

*January* 23.

'All right. The Cabinet unanimously approve. They agreed with me in my few criticisms on Gladstone's address, and he yielded.'

18 Carlton House Terrace, *January* 27, 1874.

'Gladstone is well and amiable, and we are agreed. I saw both him and Cardwell yesterday. He says our only chance is a financial success. It is clear the country does not much like the men. We must succeed by measures, and there is none which will effect that but a good budget (though even that is doubtful). Now to have a good budget you must have economy, and the Army and Navy are the only resources. Cardwell says, "I reduced last year under great pressure to the lowest level. How can I do so this year, without reducing the number of the forces, which would be contrary to the policy which I have steadfastly maintained?" So there they are at the two ends of the pole. Wolverton and I are to see Cardwell again this afternoon. I am terribly *juste milieu*.'

## CHAPTER IV

### THE RETIREMENT OF MR. GLADSTONE

### 1874–1876

It was a special assistance to Lord Granville in his uphill task in the House of Lords that he had so many active tastes in common with the pursuits of the rank and file of the assembly which he led. The most prejudiced Tory peer who might declare that 'Granville the polite' kept strange political company, could not deny that he could ride to hounds and knew how to bring down a pheasant. Neither could it be denied, although his name was not known as the owner of a Derby winner, that he was a member of the Jockey Club and a good judge of horseflesh, even if his colours were not to be seen at Epsom or at Newmarket. The story used to be told how after a crush which followed one of the early Volunteer reviews at Wimbledon, something like a rough-and-tumble fight ensued, and a large body of the rougher elements of a race-meeting mob having determined to prevent the ladies reaching their carriages, Lord Granville was then found with his gloves off in the literal acceptation of that term; and a burly foe after a short and sharp encounter had to retreat before an antagonist who, to his astonishment, quickly proved that he had studied under some teacher in Paris besides Regnier the actor.[1] It was possible for one set of critics to deride Lord Russell as a person who led a sedentary life, and Mr. Lowe as a *doctrinaire* and a bookworm. A Saturday Reviewer might declare that in any other sphere of life the Whig Premier would

[1] *Daily Telegraph*, July 23, 1867.

have been brought before the nearest bench of magistrates for breaking lamps, and that the Vice-President of the Council would have been a body-snatcher; but when Lord Granville, in 1874, said that he was quite ready to organise a steeplechase over four miles of hunting country between the leading Liberals and the leading Conservatives who represented the past and the present Administration, he was felt to be speaking about matters which a sympathetic audience knew he understood quite as well as any of those who sat opposite.

It had become the fashion of the day in 1874 to denounce the Liberal party as un-English in character and deficient in the tastes dear to country life: a sort of cross between a Continental Socialist and the person described as Stiggins in a well-known novel. In a speech made in March, very soon after the fall of the Government, Lord Granville declared that he verily believed that his colleagues had received many adverse votes because the sporting and athletic world had adjudged them to be a pack of muffs. But he was ready to throw down the glove. 'I am prepared,' he said, 'to challenge the present Ministry to pick their best men, and pit them against a like number of the defunct Liberal Government for a ride across country.'[1] It was said that Lord Spencer, Lord Halifax and Lord Hartington were present to his mind as well able to maintain the honour of the party. But the selection which would have had to precede a competition never became necessary, as the offer proved too dangerous to be accepted by the challenged party, fortunately perhaps for the safety of the Conservative Administration, whose leader once rashly alluded, at a market dinner at Aylesbury, to his having 'ridden in his youth over the land in Buckinghamshire with Count d'Orsay,' it was understood in pursuit of the fox, but there were those who deemed that this alleged flight was one of the imagination only. There was, however, no doubt as to the prowess of Mr. Ward Hunt, whose bulky form had long been a well-known object of awe both in the Northamptonshire hunting

[1] Thornton, *Foreign Secretaries in the Nineteenth Century*, iii. 154.

field and on the front bench of the House of Commons; and he at one moment seemed inclined to take up the challenge. Part of a correspondence on this subject has escaped the ravages of time.

MR. WARD HUNT TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*February* 28, 1874.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I see by the papers that you want to start a steeplechase between outgoing and incoming Ministers.

'Living in the Pytchley country, I hardly like to let your challenge pass unnoticed, so write to say that I am quite ready to ride for the new Cabinet on your own conditions, viz. age for age and weight for weight. Will you name your man?

'I suppose Bright is the nearest approach to a welter-weight amongst your late colleagues; if he can't draw twenty-five stone with his saddle, I have no objection to Stansfeld putting up behind too—the younger man might steer.

'You see that sport is my object. Yours very truly,

'G. W. HUNT.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. WARD HUNT.

*March* 2, 1874.

'DEAR MR. WARD HUNT,—Your letter having been sent to my old house, now belonging to the Secretary of the Colonies, I have only received it this afternoon. I had hitherto searched *Bell's Life* in vain for an answer to my challenge.

'Bright is of no use, he cannot pronounce the name of your hunt.

'Halifax is very fit. Nothing can be fairer than your proposal that we should put up Stansfeld behind him—to equalise the weight. But you must look out for a second lieutenant twenty-six years old, to equalise the age.

'As you have been not only in the Exchequer but also in the Admiralty, I presume you will ride in glazed hats and round jackets.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

LORD HALIFAX TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*March* 4, 1874.

'DEAR GRANVILLE,—There is only one way of settling it, i.e. by a handicap reversing the ordinary proceeding, and adding weight to the younger man. Rous would soon settle how many pounds *should*

be added for each year of lower age, and Hunt and myself might be matched. He'd beat me at going *through* a bullfinch.

'Yours ever,

'HALIFAX.'

In Hungary there is or used to be a member of the Cabinet known as the Minister *ad latus*, with the special task, apart from departmental duties, of attending the monarch personally, of acting as his confidential adviser on questions appertaining to his Crown and dignity, and preventing friction in any of the thousand and one matters which come within this important but rather mixed category of affairs. In England at this time Lord Granville could fairly have claimed the title. Marriages and the negotiations therewith connected, questions of precedence and traditional usage at Court, royal visits, the explanation to the Queen of the views of other ministers—especially when, as was occasionally the case, the Queen did not altogether concur in them or appreciate the language in which they were expressed—were among the multifarious duties quite unconnected with his own immediate department, which Lord Granville attracted to himself, owing to his reputation of being above all things a man of tact and *savoir faire*.

In addition to these duties also was the task—self-imposed yet of untold importance to a composite organisation like Mr. Gladstone's following—of maintaining the unity of the party. Social and personal influences had done much since 1832 to keep up the Liberal connection, and what Holland House had been early in the century and Cambridge House at a rather later date, Bruton Street and afterwards Carlton House Terrace, to which in 1873 Lord and Lady Granville removed, now became. Not that the society which met there was exclusively political. If the political note predominated, and if Liberalism distinctly tinged the atmosphere, any exclusiveness would have been fatal to Lord Granville's own conception of what society ought to be. A strong partisan himself—far too strong a partisan, the Duke of Argyll once plainly told him—he nevertheless thought that, except on those rare occasions when the necessity of the hour required the

strictness of the game, and that the persons who met should be not only in one house but also of one mind—society was all the better for being a judicious mixture of various elements, where persons holding different and even opposite opinions meet on common ground, and the blend of what is with what is not political prevents conversation degenerating into a mere repetition of the bare commonplaces of parliamentary life. The Liberalism which could not stand contact with the breezes of the outer world was thought likely by him to be but a form of cloistered virtue partaking of the sectarianism of a conventicle. A healthy mixture was of the essence of the game. From this point of view the occupation of the Colonial Office and afterwards of the Foreign Office was a valuable adjunct in widening the breadth of the social horizon. The time had indeed not arrived when it was to be considered necessary to make a constant and obtrusive parade of Imperial ideas; yet had any visitor been in danger of thinking parochially, a glance round the room at the company present would have been sufficient to remind him that in London beats the pulse of a great Empire, with interests scattered all over the globe; that the curiosity of the active brain of the sagacious host extended far beyond 'the silver streak of sea' the praises of which had recently been celebrated in the *Edinburgh Review* by Mr. Gladstone; and that Lord Granville possessed above all men the art of bringing out and assimilating the talents of his guests, from whatever quarter of the world they might happen to come.

'There are but two extant specimens of the political salon,' said a contemporary writer. 'One of these is the drawing-room of Countess Waldegrave; the other is that of Countess Granville. What the Saturday evenings at Cambridge House were, Lady Granville's receptions in Bruton Street have been during the whole period of the last Liberal reign.'[1] Not that any attempt was ever made by Lord Granville to emulate the contemporary feats of Lord Houghton in promoting the meeting at the same table of persons of incongruous and even hostile views, and then waiting to see the

[1] *World*, February 10, 1875.

result of the mixture of the acid and the alkali. What might have happened if General Riccioti Garibaldi had met Cardinal Manning, shortly after the fall of Rome, at a celebrated breakfast party to which both are said to have been purposely invited by the witty owner of Fryston, was an interesting subject of speculation; but such experiments, putting aside any other reason, were too dangerous for a Secretary of State to attempt.

A Foreign Ambassador in London was once reported to have insisted with his Government on the necessity of his own early return to the Embassy in Paris, which he had formerly occupied, because there was next to no 'society' in the British capital; and he had in consequence, he said, found his evenings intolerable. If the Ambassador meant the form of society which exists abroad, where on certain well-known evenings in the week the lady of the house is known to be at home to her friends, who are expected to call without formal invitations, and a circle of persons is thus formed who can rely on meeting one another, doubtless the Ambassador was justified. Such a form of society, largely modelled on that of the capital of France in the eighteenth century, was probably commoner before the French Revolution, in London as well as in Paris, at a time when society was far more international than it ever was again, before the two great wars of 1793 to 1802 and 1803 to Waterloo. Since then, as a rule, society in London has been chiefly understood to consist in the aggregation of a large number of persons of both sexes in a limited number of rooms, which on a generous computation are capable of holding about one half of the invited guests. 'J'admire ce qu'on entasse de monde dans des maisons qui sont de vraies boxes,' the Princess Lieven observed of this form of society; in which, she added, 'il y a mouvement de corps et pas mouvement d'âme.'[1]

This custom Lord Granville had, like others, to recognise when the god of party required the annual sacrifices to be offered. But the origin of his social influence was not to

[1] *La Princesse de Lieven*, par Ernest Daudet, pp. 104, 283.

be sought there, for nothing specially distinguished these occasions from similar entertainments both before and since. That influence had another origin, and sprang from the intercourse of the stream of guests who, night by night, day by day, and with perfect ease and freedom, were constantly coming and going at his house. Politicians, diplomatists, party leaders, the representatives of literature and the press, all those in fact who counted for something, were to be seen there. Each and all when they left took away with them some personal impression of gratitude to their host, who possessed in a supreme degree the art of putting people at their ease, and was recognised as one of those rare personalities in whom the indulgence of generous propensities was natural, and himself took pleasure in what was pleasant to others. Of all powers social influence is the most difficult to exercise, the most difficult to account for, and the most difficult to portray, because it is entirely a matter of impression. What writer has ever adequately described or analysed the gift so peculiarly Lord Granville's own, the

> 'Social wit which, never kindling strife,
> Blazed in the small sweet courtesies of life'?

These courtesies, like the most beautiful flowers, are often the most short-lived, quickly passing out of recollection along with the generation which knew them, and are afterwards only evoked into the light by the memories of a few survivors, which once more give to them an ephemeral life. Yet these things are as much a part of the history of the time as the contents of the Statute Book or the Journals of the Statistical Society.

Lord Granville, said a French critic, 'avait du charme et de la tradition.'[1] The latter quality was none the less effectively impressed on his hearers because accompanied by the Horatian lightness of touch with which he wielded the weapons of social fence. Not that occasions could not arise when the same power of reserve which distinguished his famous sister could be noticed in him, and he could be as secretive and dis-

[1] *Siècle*, 1 Avril, 1891.

passionate, as perfect a specimen of bland and smiling politeness as the Prince de Talleyrand himself, whose countenance put Sir Stratford Canning in mind 'of a rapid stream frozen over smoothly and transparently enough to show the current, without discovering the bottom.'[1] His countenance, on the surface so unimpressionable and apparently careless, once struck an American observer in the French capital as always full of 'meaning,' and not a true reflex of the mind. The soul below was not so careless as the face pretended to be. When the salon of the hostess of the evening was crowded with the brightest and most brilliant of diplomatists and statesmen, Lord Granville 'moved among them like a sphinx — silent, impenetrable, and self-contained — always smiling and debonair; ever courteous and refined, but, like a Foreign Office sponge, absorbing every drop of intelligence while giving none in return.'[2]

There have been salons the principal object of which has been to promote the advancement of some eminent personage. The society, for example, which in Paris at a period a little later than this gathered at the residence of Mdme. Edmond Adam, would not have been misrepresented if described as intended to promote the supremacy of M. Gambetta. The salon of Lady Palmerston had undoubtedly been a considerable factor in the ultimate success of Lord Palmerston over Lord John Russell in the battle for the leadership of the Liberal party. No idea of this kind was ever entertained by those who crossed the threshold of Lady Granville's house. It was precluded by the absolute unselfishness of the character of the host: a trait which from the first had marked him out as the great pacificator of politics, and enabled him at critical moments to create, and in ordinary times to maintain, a spirit of accord which obliged rivalries to conceal themselves and ill-will to be silent, and, as in 1859, to transform themselves unexpectedly into harmonious action and even into positive good humour. An eminent position in the party and long familiarity with the leaders of all sections

[1] *Life of Viscount Stratford de Redcliffe*, by Stanley Lane Poole, i. 237.

[2] *Times of Philadelphia*, April 1891.

of opinion are, no doubt, qualifications which in this respect go far towards commanding success, but in Lord Granville's case these qualifications were devoid of self-assertion and exerted by way of criticism and friendly suggestion rather than by any visible attempt at the outward exercise of authority. In the genial sunlight of his presence political differences were forgotten, and personal jealousies were smoothed over; rivals who had said that an eternal disagreement separated them, were found after all to have discovered common ground; the discontented colleague was induced to accept the situation; the veteran was persuaded not to sink into the bitter critic of former allies; and the youthful politician, who had perhaps learnt in the atmosphere of Eton and Christ Church to regard a profession of Liberal opinions as inconsistent with good taste, was gently persuaded of the error of his ways and kept within the fold. All this would have been impossible if besides the accomplished diplomatist there had not been beneath the outer political vizor an inner man, a character of real sincerity and simplicity of heart, who desired that the right thing should be done, but was not particular who did it, so long as it was done. It was this gift which secured not merely the political friendship but the personal devotion of his followers. Everybody, it has been often said, has friends as long as he is in power, or is likely to return there. But to secure the personal allegiance which survives the hour of defeat, and makes political separation difficult and even painful, depends on the possession of the rarer gifts of human nature; qualities of a refined order which are not superficial, but lie somewhere deep down in the nature of the man.

The salon of Mdme. Swetchine, in Paris, which as a young man Lord Granville had occasionally visited, has been described as neither a mere room where guests were received, nor a literary coterie, nor yet a school. Mdme. Swetchine would indeed have started at hearing the word 'disciple' mentioned. Her supremacy consisted in the manner in which she knew how to reconcile characters of the most different types and intelligences of the most opposite descriptions; and in

each case how to mark what was good and to excuse what was faulty, so that all alike found there either some congenial quality or something to help or aid or strengthen them.[1] Such an ascendency—and it was precisely such an ascendency which Lord Granville possessed—is not the result of intellectual gifts or of conversational eloquence or of social cleverness only, nor even of all these combined. It exists—to quote the example of another statesman, M. Waldeck Rousseau, whose powers of welding together different opinions into harmonious action greatly resembled those of Lord Granville—because the heart has not been allowed to sink to the level of so much 'excess baggage,'[2] and in such cases the man or woman becomes more interesting than the politician: the exact converse of what used to be said of the Princesse de Lieven even by some of her greatest admirers.[3]

'At Walmer [wrote Baron de Malortie, traveller, politician, and soldier of fortune] everything breathed peace, genuine affection, and happiness; and to see Lord Granville riding with his wife and children, to see them together at play or at meals, was really a treat to less fortunate outsiders.

'A total absence of show, pretension, and braggadocio showed the family in the true light of highly bred children of Albion.

'Simplicity in dress, speech, and manners put all visitors at once at ease. You did not feel a stranger amongst them, and you felt that both the master of the house and his beautiful, kind and gifted *châtelaine* did not look upon their guests as so many bores, as an unavoidable ordeal, but that they had real pleasure in making everybody—down to the most humble—comfortable, happy and at home.

'Even the children, taking after their distinguished parents, were throwing rays of sunshine, of childlike merriment and grace into the hearts of their surroundings; they had evidently been taught that kind and considerate thought ought always to be the prime mover in

[1] *Mémoires de Mdme. de Swetchine*, vol. i. ch. xii. pp. 308–317.

[2] Obituary notice of M. Waldeck Rousseau, by M. Emmanuel Arène, *Figaro*, August 1904.

[3] 'On n'attire que par la grâce; elle n'avait que bel air; on n'attache que par le cœur; il ne dominait pas en elle.'—*La Princesse de Lieven*, par Ernest Daudet, p. 392.

our relations with all with whom we come in contact, be they friends, strangers, or servants.

'I shall never forget the homely, cheerful look of the drawing-room at Walmer, where, after breakfast, guests and family—old and young—used to congregate, each following the moment's inspiration or inclination: Lord Granville, as a rule, selecting this moment for the despatch of official duties—he was Foreign Secretary at the time I am referring to—dozens of red leather despatch boxes, with their respective paper labels, were piled up next to the writing table—indeed, there was but one for both Lord and Lady Granville, for the space, in this the only well-sized room, was as limited as the number of apartments available for the family and guests.

'No doubt it was curious to watch the man at the helm of Great Britain's foreign policy dividing his attention between the Powers and his wife and children, between the interests of State and the innocent games of family and guests, in fact dying to join in the sport and fun—it was a truly homely, almost patriarchal family scene—to be still further enlivened on the arrival of the G.O.M., who came over with Mrs. Gladstone and Lord and Lady Sydney, whose guest he was at Deal, because—you would not guess it in a thousand—because there was to be a fair that afternoon, and Mr. Gladstone wanted to try a merry-go-round.

'Indeed, we all went after luncheon, and it was only on assuring him that the Opposition papers would make fun of it next morning, that Mr. Gladstone renounced a "suree" on the merry-go-round, much *contre cœur*, and he did his best to console himself by strolling into every booth, from the giant woman to the calf with eight legs; every possible monstrosity was honoured by the Premier's visit, who seemed to enjoy himself more than the schoolboys, to whom their dons showed the G.O.M.'[1]

At Walmer, as in London, Lord Granville was able to extend a varied hospitality to a constant stream of guests.

[1] The sketch appears to have been written about September 1881. Attached to the Wardenship of the Cinque Ports is the patronage of the post of Captain of Deal Castle. In 1879 this post became vacant, and the office being nominally a responsible Government post, Lord Granville conceived it to be his duty to write a rather laborious letter of considerable length to Lord Beaconsfield, then Prime Minister, explaining why he had appointed Viscount Sydney, then Lord Lieutenant of Kent. It evoked the following reply:—

'LORD BEACONSFIELD TO LORD GRANVILLE.

'HUGHENDEN MANOR, *October* 21, 1879.

'MY DEAR LORD,—Happy Sydney! to be your neighbour.

'Yours sincerely, BEACONSFIELD.'

Visitors from London, diplomatists on their way to or from the Continent, politicians and literary men, each and all found the castle by the sea in Kent open to them, and a convenient resort, where host and hostess both knew how to entertain their company, whether on pleasure or business bent, or, as sometimes happened when Lord Granville was in office, on both. Lord Granville once wrote to Mr. Lowell to ask if the 'most engaged man in England' would come to pay Lady Granville and him a visit. Mr. Lowell accepted, and before leaving wrote in the Visitors' Book the following lines with a neat return of the compliment:

> The most engaged man he calls *me*,
> A kind of Mormon fate presaging;
> I with more verity call *he*
> Of all the most engaging.[1]

And yet was Lord Granville in reality a shy man?

The question may seem paradoxical. Lord Granville himself thought the answer was in the affirmative. The observation was once made in his presence that the natural instinct of a true-born Englishman on entering a drawing-room is to get behind the nearest chair: an observation which the company then present, happening to be all of the nationality indicted, unanimously endorsed, speaking, no doubt, from personal experience. One of their number, however, congratulated Lord Granville on being an exception to the rule. Lord Granville demurred to the compliment. He came of a shy family, he said, or at least of a family a great number of whom were very shy; but he had had one great advantage from his earliest youth, which might account for his having an undeserved reputation: he had nearly always been in an unquestioned position. This, he said, made all the difference. If you went to an official entertainment, or into a crowded room, or into a select circle, or, what amounted to the same thing, into a circle which thought itself select, and you felt that nobody could doubt your right to be present, there was little excuse for shyness. This advantage he had

[1] December 24, 1881.

almost invariably had. But he distinctly remembered as a young man, when the Tory party was in power after 1841, having once been bidden to an entertainment at Court, where he soon realised that by some accident he was nearly the only person of the opposite party present; and how, hearing —— say in a loud whisper, 'There is that d——d fellow Leveson. Pray what is he doing here?' he had at once instinctively looked around him in order to make 'for the chair.' To this latent shyness Lord Granville attributed what he believed to have been his own failure in knowing how to deal with the press.

'I said to you [he once wrote to Mr. Gladstone] that I had not done enough with the press when last in the Foreign Office. . . . I am a bad hand at it. I am civil to some of the press, but what they want is constant information and briefs. I am always inclined to be reticent, and have no fertility. You of course have no time.'[1]

Of the inhabitants of the province of Périgord—the country of Brantôme, of Montesquieu, and Fénelon—it has been said that 'without the proverbial volubility of some of their immediate neighbours, they have a power of good-humoured conversation which opens the heart; yet a certain reserve is not foreign to them, and their silence can be as happy as their talk can be skilful. Above all things they possess a certain subtle charm of manner, and the capricious dame of whom Charles V. used to speak, Dame Fortune, seems to accompany them.'[2] Lord Granville was a sort of English Périgourdin, and it was only natural, when the Comédie Française made their visit to England in 1871, that he should have been singled out by a unanimous suffrage to propose the health of the distinguished company in their own language. Nor was he unable to convince a younger generation that the tradition of the brilliant success of his earlier speeches, when as one of the deputation of British Commissioners he visited France in August 1851 and afterwards in 1867, on the invitation of the Municipality of Paris to celebrate the success of the Exhibitions of those years, was

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 31, 1880.

[2] Gabriel Hanotaux, *Études Historiques* (1886), p. 61.

no traveller's tale.[1] M. Got, the celebrated doyen of the company, was delighted with his playful eloquence and variety of conversation. 'Yet,' the great actor thoughtfully added, 'you would not venture to slap him on the back.'[2] Lord Granville, in fact, knew how to avoid the defect attributed to the great Earl of Cork 'of being so civil that nobody thanked him for it.'[3] His French accent was said by some to be slightly old-fashioned, and to recall the days of the *ancien régime*. 'It seemed to me not only quite correct but idiomatic,' Lord Stanhope wrote after the Exhibition Banquet of 1867, 'and your parting compliment to the ladies was one of the most gracefully turned that I ever heard.'[4] The same post which brought Lord Stanhope's approval also brought a return of the compliment from one of the ladies themselves. 'Que vous avez été bon de vous occuper de tout cela,' the fair scribe wrote, 'vos discours m'ont charmée. Ils ont eu un succès immense. C'était le plus joli Français possible.'[5] Lord Granville's knowledge of French had been perfected—as already mentioned—when a young man by study under Regnier the actor. He was one of the few Englishmen who could not only make a French speech but could also hazard a French joke. 'J'ai occupé si souvent le fauteuil de la présidence dans des banquets publics,' he told a French audience, 'que mes amis m'ont surnommé "le Père la Chaise."'[6] A French bookmaker, who in 1870 had shouted 'À Berlin!' is said to have forgiven him at the time of the Commune for saying: 'Eh bien! Eh bien! C'est donc vrai que les Français ont pris *Paris*!' A cook, whose martial ardour had not been such as to induce him to cross the Channel and enlist in the army of the Loire, was able to justify his conduct to his master without fear of being misunderstood, by the observation that he preferred making *entrées* in London to making *sorties* in Paris. But to being a great linguist in the ordinary acceptation of the

[1] *La Liberté*, 1 Avril, 1891; *Journal de Bruxelles*, 8 Avril, 1891.
[2] *Melbourne Argus*, May 24, 1891. [3] Boswell's *Johnson*, iii. 183.
[4] Lord Stanhope to Lord Granville, October 27, 1867.
[5] Mdlle. Sabine de Noailles, who married Mr. Standish, October 27, 1847.
[6] *La Liberté*, 1 Avril, 1891; *Journal de Bruxelles*, 8 Avril, 1891.

term, Lord Granville made no kind of pretence. He was once half amused and half annoyed by a paragraph which went the round of the newspapers attributing to him a knowledge of 'forty languages.' 'Why,' he observed to a friend, 'outside my own, I don't know four.' The explanation was that a Life had just appeared of John, Lord Granville, the statesman of the reigns of George II. and George III., better known to the historian as Lord Carteret; in affairs the brilliant if unsuccessful rival of the Pelhams, and in languages the equal of Cardinal Mezzofanti, who was said to have acquired tongues ancient and modern with the same facility with which he imbibed port; and to have died quoting Homer.[1] A journalist, more familiar probably with the days of Queen Victoria than with those of the Georges, had transferred for the benefit of his provincial readers an account, from the pages of a London literary review, of the varied accomplishments of the Lord President of 1760, to the credit of the Lord President of a century later, who thus found himself suddenly crowned with unexpected laurels.

Mr. Gladstone told Lord Granville that he considered the House of Commons elected in 1874 'the most reactionary, the most apathetic, and the least independent in which he ever sat.'[2] In 1874 Mr. Gladstone was in his sixty-fifth year. He had frequently spoken of the impossibility of a man being able to play an active or a useful part in politics after a certain age, and at that age he had persuaded himself that he had now arrived. The desire for retirement was accentuated by disgust at the ingratitude of the electorate in rejecting a Ministry which had carried more Liberal measures of a comprehensive character than any which had held power since the time of Lord Grey. It was still further quickened by resentment at the conduct of the Irish members, and at the action of some prominent men on the Liberal side, who throughout the Parliament of 1868 had formed a species of left wing on religious and educational

[1] Wood, *Essay on Homer*, p. 5, ed. 1824; *Life of Lord Carteret*, by Ballantyne, p. 364.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, March 12, 1874.

questions, in regard to which they had conceived doubts, from their own point of view not unjustified, of the soundness of the views of the Prime Minister and Mr. Forster. The Ministry had no sooner fallen, than it began to be whispered that Mr. Gladstone intended shortly to give up the leadership of the Liberal party, and even to retire altogether from parliamentary and political life, in order to devote the remainder of his days to literary retirement and study. In the month of March, Mr. Gladstone himself made an intimation to Lord Granville, that some determination of this kind on his part was likely to take effect before long. Nor is there any reason to doubt that at the moment the late Prime Minister believed that at Hawarden he would be able to find another San Yuste or a second Salona. Others —and Lord Granville was of their number—thought that neither the cultivation of cabbages, nor the mechanism of clocks, nor the personal superintendence of the preparations for his own funeral, would satisfy the intellectual needs of Mr. Gladstone; and they doubted whether he would find 'the amusements of letters and devotion capable by themselves of fixing the attention' of his restless intellect,[1] even with the chance of entering the lists of theological controversy against such worthy antagonists as Dr. Manning and Dr. Newman, and with the advantage of the assistance of so skilled a coadjutor as Lord Acton, between whom and the two future Cardinals there was no love lost. There had been a disagreeable correspondence between Dr. Manning and Mr. Gladstone in regard to Lord Acton's action at Rome during the Vatican Council. 'I will say no more,' Dr. Manning had written to Mr. Gladstone in a letter which the latter forwarded to Lord Granville, 'of Lord Acton, whose career has been a disappointment to his truest friends, not Catholics only. He might have done much in public life, and among us. Of the former you are judge; of the latter—I am sorry to say he has lost all hold in England and abroad except upon individuals.'[2]

[1] Gibbon, *History of the Decline and Fall*, vol. ii. ch. xiii. p. 100, ed. 1872.

[2] Cardinal Manning to Mr. Gladstone, November 15, 1870.

'I send you back Manning's letter,' was Lord Granville's reply. 'I presume there is no Protestant or atheist whom he dislikes more than Acton. I am, however, afraid he may be right about the latter's success in public life. If anything will spur him into action, it will be the knowledge of Manning triumphing in his not having done so.'[1]

All considerations as to Mr. Gladstone's future pursuits were, however, speculative. The pressing question of the hour was, who could succeed to the vacant place when his retirement had taken place. Among the most trusted of his colleagues in his first Cabinet was Mr. Cardwell, who as Secretary of State for War had carried through the House of Commons not only the abolition of purchase, but the first comprehensive scheme of Army Reform ever submitted to Parliament. He was generally indicated as the man most fit to lead the Liberal party next to Mr. Gladstone himself, not only by ability and experience, but owing to his close personal connection with Mr. Gladstone, for Mr. Cardwell, like Mr. Gladstone, belonged to the inner circle of the old Peelite connection. But the severe struggles of the past few years had told on his physical strength, and with the fall of the Government he decided to seek rest in the calmer atmosphere of the House of Lords.

'Gladstone has told me [Lord Granville wrote to him] of what passed between you and him; an intimation through Wolverton from you to Gladstone that, for reasons which you mentioned, you would be glad of a peerage, and his reply that he would be glad to perform such an act of justice to your great services, subject to the possible dissuasion of your political friends.[2]

'As far as my personal feelings and my appreciation of your services go, and as far as the House of Lords is concerned, whether with or without a recognised leader, there is nothing I should like better; but on other grounds I feel bound to place my protest before you and Gladstone.

'There are three policies which Gladstone may follow. He may continue as the active leader of the Liberal party, although it be in a minority, with the avowed purpose of reconstructing, as Sir R.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 18, 1870.

[2] Mr. George Glyn had become Lord Wolverton.

Peel did before him, their fortunes; or he may continue leader, seldom in the House, abstaining from all active opposition, and only from time to time making speeches of almost a judicial character; or he may give up his leadership, leaving the Liberals either to do without a leader for a time, or to choose another.

'In either of the former suppositions, it is a matter for him to consider how far he can do without your assistance; and it is for you to consider how far, in order to secure your avoidance of possible disagreeable contingencies, you will allow your great but harassing work at the War Office to be destroyed, without an effort in the only place where it can effectually be saved.

'In these two cases I have nothing to say. But if Gladstone persists in the third course, which at present recommends itself to him, I cannot say how strongly I am of opinion that it would be injurious for you and for him that you should leave the House of Commons.

'Although there are preponderating reasons why he should not abandon the lead of the Opposition even for a time, there are undoubtedly considerations which may weigh with him in an opposite sense. But in that case he ought to do everything in his power to leave the Liberal party in as advantageous a position as possible.' [1]

Notwithstanding Lord Granville's appeal, Mr. Cardwell persevered in his determination to retire, and it became evident that the new leader would have to be sought elsewhere. During what remained of the session of 1874, Mr. Gladstone was a rare visitor to the House of Commons, and as he had appointed no lieutenant, confusion and disintegration rapidly made themselves felt among his diminished and discouraged followers. The rank and file of the party abused the leaders for not having a distinct policy, and for not giving a clear lead, failing to comprehend the difficulty in which the occupants of the front bench found themselves placed by the frequent absence of their chief. Meanwhile the reports day by day acquired greater consistency, that Mr. Gladstone proposed to abandon the leadership altogether. It was not that Mr. Gladstone was persuaded that the era of change was over. He sent Lord Granville at this time a paper of important subjects, ranging from the extension of the

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Cardwell, February 14, 1874.

suffrage to undenominational education—nine in number—all of which he recognised as matters exciting keen interest in the party, but in regard to none of which did he recognise either such a consensus of opinion as would encourage him to take the lead, or such clear signs of support in the public as to justify a belief in a successful issue. In regard to at least one of these subjects—undenominational education—he was conscious that his own feelings and those of his party were not in unison. On another occasion he sent Lord Granville his points on half a dozen scraps of paper, with many refinements and subdivisions of facts and opinions, which Lord Granville told him he would like to treat 'as old Bessborough used to treat his playing cards when luck was adverse—tear them up into small bits and toss them in the fire.'[1] But Mr. Gladstone's conclusion was always the same—the necessity of resignation. It was obvious that this state of things could not last for ever, and that before Parliament met in 1875 some definite arrangement must be made.

'It appears to me absolutely impossible that things can go on as in last session [Mr. Goschen wrote early in that year to Lord Granville]. Gladstone's advice used to be, "You must settle amongst yourselves what line to take," but such a settlement was, as you know, impossible. No common course agreed upon by most of us was in the least binding on the rest. The more loyal surrendered their judgment for the common good. The less loyal took the advantage. Any two or three ex-members of the Government, not of the Cabinet but any two subordinate members of any position, were able to produce the impression of dissension.

'Again, we used to be pressed by a number of our party to settle the direction to be given to a debate on a given question. If we did not do so, we were accused of neglecting our duty, in fact we were effacing ourselves. If we did do so, we were taunted with attempting to lead where we had no authority. This was the position of Gladstone's ex-colleagues in the session ; and remember, the more loyal the colleagues, the greater the difficulty. The position was less difficult for those who had no scruple in simply playing their own game.

[1] Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 503.

'And what has been the position during the recess? The intense and natural and righteous desire to see Gladstone back again has led to the general abuse of Gladstone's ex-colleagues. It cannot be otherwise. One representative man says he hopes to see Mr. Gladstone back "emancipated from all his colleagues," and this is only a sample of what many have said. The absence of the chief must necessarily lead a dispirited party to murmur against the innocent lieutenants; and I say frankly that Gladstone is placing us (in the House of Commons) in a humiliating and *intolerable* position, if he persists in the same course which he followed last year.

'He may say, "I am sorry for it, but it is not my affair." But ought he to say so, to colleagues who have worked as heartily and loyally with him for five years as his late Cabinet did? The party and the country come before us, of course, and both require his services, but I think the consideration due to those with whom he has worked is entitled to some weight too.

'To continue on the same footing as last session would be to some of us, clearly, political ruin. At the same time we are bound hand and foot in a most painful way. We are almost doomed to sit on the front Opposition bench, and yet we cannot perform any of the functions of an Opposition with any self-respect.

'There was a time once, I believe, when the Opposition was split into two hostile divisions, but they were *recognised* divisions.[1] But we have no split, yet no union, and there is absolutely no authority of any kind.

'It would be rather ridiculous if the members of the late Cabinet were to dot themselves about the back benches as independent members; yet after the first laugh, I doubt if they would present a more ridiculous appearance than we should do if we were to repeat the experiences of last session.

'You see I have kept my promise of writing without reserve, and have indeed unburdened my mind on the subject to you, an old colleague.

'It is part of the ban under which we are laid that we can't even explain our position publicly, or defend ourselves against the many sneers to which we are subject, without running the risk of giving rise to endless misapprehensions and false inferences.'[2]

Early in January, Lord Granville received a letter from Mr. Gladstone containing the draft of a letter communicating the coming resignation. He at once wrote a protest, hoping

[1] The allusion is to the period from 1855 to 1859.

[2] Mr. Goschen to Lord Granville, January 5, 1875.

that Mr. Gladstone might yet be persuaded to reconsider his decision.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.,
*January* 5, 1875.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I came to town yesterday for twenty-four hours. Wolverton gave me to-day your draft and commentary. I have hardly had time to read it, still less to answer it, with any care. But I should be sorry to receive such a letter. I feel sure that your decision would be injurious to the party. I suspect that it would be disadvantageous to yourself.

'A great party should have a recognised leader in Parliament, more especially the party favouring progress but not unanimous as to the rate at which that progress should be made. The absence of a recognised leader, and of the organisation which follows, must lead to such indiscipline as will not be overcome by any sudden enthusiasm for a cause or for an individual.

'With you, (I should almost say in existence, but certainly) in the House of Commons occasionally taking a share in the debates, it is impossible that any individual, or any combination of two or three, should have any authority. I doubt any one being foolish enough to attempt it.

'As for yourself, the question is more doubtful. There might be immediate ease, and your personal reputation is so great, and your hold on a large portion of the country so strong, that secession will not affect your power of resuming your parliamentary position when you choose to do so. But you would grievously disappoint the Liberal party, with the exception perhaps of —— and a few others, and you would discontent your late colleagues in the House of Commons. When you felt compelled by duty to take up a worthy cause, and carry it to a successful issue, you would find a machine perfectly out of gear.

'The question of overwork is serious, but with your marvellous mental fecundity and activity, and your temperament, will you ever find yourself in a position in which you will not overwork your physical strength? And in the present state of affairs, your duty as leader of the Opposition would not entail hourly attendance, or minute criticism of every act and every measure brought forward by the Government. Once assuming the lead, you could then depute to others a considerable amount of the bulk of detail.

'I presume no one expects or wishes to turn out the present Ministry during this session, or even for some time.

'Reservation till Saturday of remarks on the Catholic vote, possible legislation on Church of England matters, and other points of commentary. 'Yours, G.'

A meeting of the ex-Cabinet was held to bring pressure to bear on Mr. Gladstone.

'Everybody but Bright [Lord Granville wrote to the Duke of Argyll on January 14] was here to-day to endeavour to do what Cardwell and Goschen, Hartington and I failed to do, and you will see the result in the morning paper. I am not sure that you would have been as strong as some of us. But I fear that the Liberal party will fall to pieces in consequence of his decision. I do not, however, pretend there is not something to be said on his side. He is very well, but neighs like a war horse at hearing that Newman has issued 110 pages.'[1]

Mr. Bright had meanwhile written to Lord Granville on the situation created by Mr. Gladstone's proposed action.

MR. BRIGHT TO LORD GRANVILLE.

ROCHDALE, *January* 12, 1875.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I should have been glad to come to Carlton House Terrace on Thursday—if I could have left home—but unfortunately I have been indoors since Thursday last, and in bed from Saturday to this morning, suffering from severe cold and cough which seized me when the thaw came on. I am obliged to be specially careful, as I have a formidable engagement at Birmingham which will require me to go there at the end of next week.

'I am anxious to know what course Mr. Gladstone proposes to take during the coming session. The "party" is, I fear, in no condition to take any forward step, and the Irish branch of it will be less to be depended upon than before. Ecclesiastical and theological questions will play mischief all round, but there is no escape from them. When establishments are abolished and the Pope suppressed, there may perhaps be peace.

'If you have anything to tell me after Thursday, I shall be glad to hear from you. 'Believe me always,

'Very sincerely yours,

'JOHN BRIGHT.'

[1] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, January 14, 1875.

Notwithstanding the appeals made to him, Mr. Gladstone's letter of resignation appeared on the 14th. It ran as follows :—

MR. GLADSTONE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

11 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.,
*January* 13, 1875.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—The time has, I think, arrived when I ought to revert to the subject of the letter which I addressed to you on March 12.[1]

'Before determining whether I should offer to assume a charge which might extend over a length of time, I have reviewed, with all the care in my power, a number of considerations both public and private, of which a portion, and these not by any means insignificant, were not in existence at the date of that letter.

'The result has been that I see no public advantage in my continuing to act as the leader of the Liberal party ; and that at the age of sixty-five, and after forty-two years of a laborious public life, I think myself entitled to retire on the present opportunity. This retirement is dictated to me by my personal views as to the best method of spending the closing years of my life.

'I need hardly say that my conduct in Parliament will continue to be governed by the principles on which I have heretofore acted ; and, whatever arrangements may be made for the treatment of general business, and for the advantage or convenience of the Liberal party, they will have my cordial support. I should perhaps add that I am at present, and may for a short time be, engaged on a special matter, which occupies me closely.

'Believe me always,
'Sincerely yours,
'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

On the great event which had thus taken place, Mr. Bright commented as follows in reply to a letter which he had received from Lord Granville :—

MR. JOHN BRIGHT TO LORD GRANVILLE.

ROCHDALE, *January* 15, 1875.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Thank you for your letter, though its contents are so unpleasing, and yet there seems no remedy.

'I think the only point upon which any of us can fairly complain,

[1] See page 134.

and I am not sure that it is open to *you* to do so, is that the late sudden dissolution was so much his own act, that whether the result were good or bad, he should have accepted it and stood by and with his party. If the election had given us a majority, he would have continued to be Minister ; if not, it should not have deprived us of a leader.

'But for this one view of the case, his conduct is reasonable and for himself perhaps wise. He was scandalously treated by a few Englishmen, Fawcett, Torrens, Bouverie, Horsman, Peel, &c., and by the whole Irish contingent, who prostrated themselves before their bishops and destroyed the best Minister whom England had ever seen. For a time the work of the party is done. "Home rule," hollow and false as to all good, is real enough for some mischief, and the Roman party, treacherous to its friends, knows no limits to its baseness in the pursuit of objects which will remain, I hope, for ever unattainable. The party then is weakened and for a time destroyed, and I cannot see for it any immediate or early restoration.

'As to a successor, I can scarcely give an opinion. A leader should step into his place by general consent—he should be indicated by his own great qualities. Just now, there seems no one upon whom all eyes are turned—I speak, of course, as regards the House of Commons, where, for management in the House, a leader must necessarily be. For myself I am wholly at sea. I came to the front Opposition bench at Mr. Gladstone's wish, and do not find him there, but am in the midst of discord—no one leading—no one yielding—only chaos. Could I have foreseen what was coming, I should have retired at the election, for it is hard to be on a field of conflict without full strength to join the fray. For comfort I measure the doings of the past—the further we are removed from them the greater they seem—and I rejoice that I have been permitted to take part in them. 'Always very sincerely yours,

'John Bright.'

It would be idle to deny that in 1875 there was a strong under-current of dissatisfaction with Mr. Gladstone's recent conduct of affairs.

'I cannot say I regret what has occurred [Lord Houghton, who acted the part of the Greek chorus in Liberal politics, wrote to Lord Granville]. In the dissolution a year ago Gladstone showed a want of prevision and of consideration for others that has been growing on him ever since. I don't see how his conduct of public affairs was any longer possible. I remember Sir R. Peel saying to me at

Drayton when he wrote his second book: "Why will he write, and on such subjects? This controversial theology will bring him into great trouble some day." I only wish that he had a higher and more wholesome literature now to retire upon. People are calling him Charles the Fifth, and these certainly are not the clocks that he will get to strike harmoniously together.'[1]

But the subject of eager discussion was not so much the opportuneness of the step, but the answer to the question, 'Will he come back?' Would he or would he not resemble Charles V. to the end of the chapter? Lord Granville suspected that when Mr. Gladstone's controversy with the Vatican was over, his retirement might terminate like that of one of the successors of Charles V. on the throne of Spain, rather than in the cloistered life of the great Emperor and King. Philip V. in a moment of depression resigned the crown of Spain in 1724, and handed it over to his son; but he claimed it back a year afterwards, when the Papal Legate with characteristic complacency had told him that his oath was no longer binding, and his successor was found only too eager to retire from a situation which had been made untenable for him. Democracies can on occasion be as pliable as Papal Legates, and their hearts are frequently more tender. Few, if any, of those who were conversant with the complicated mechanism of Mr. Gladstone's mind, felt any doubt that the hot fit would follow the cold fit and that under such circumstances the leadership of the Liberal party could not be held with advantage by anybody except by him; nor did anyone believe that his present retirement would be either 'final or complete,' which Lord Ripon told Lord Granville was the only condition capable of rendering it anything except a fresh cause of complication and disaster.[2] Lord Townshend, after his fall, had devoted the remainder of his life to the cultivation and the improvement of the turnip in Norfolk. Hardly could it be deemed that Mr. Gladstone would long be content to follow in his footsteps.

[1] Lord Houghton to Lord Granville, January 17, 1875.
[2] Lord Ripon to Lord Granville, January 16, 1875.

Owing to the elevation of Mr. Cardwell to the peerage, the choice of leaders in the House of Commons was felt to lie between Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster. The situation was so far peculiar that Mr. Forster, who in ordinary circumstances might have been considered the natural representative of the more Radical section of the party, received from them but a divided support. Even more than Mr. Gladstone, Mr. Forster had irritated Nonconformist opinion both inside and outside Parliament, by the concessions which he had made to the Church of England in the Education Act of 1870: concessions which were resented even more in him than in Mr. Gladstone, because in Mr. Forster the Nonconformists had expected to find a special patron of their views. It was their conviction that at a critical moment he had fallen away from the spirit of the policy which, under far less favourable circumstances, had been that of Lord Russell and Lord Granville, and was responsible for losing an opportunity of carrying it out which they had never had before and might never have again.

In some quarters the impression prevailed that by Mr. Gladstone's retirement, Lord Granville, as the Liberal leader in the House of Lords, at once became the leader of the party as a whole. Dr. Lyon Playfair, member for the University of Edinburgh, who had frequently been brought into connection with Lord Granville in the business of successive International Exhibitions, and had been Postmaster-General for a few months in the last days of the last Ministry, made himself the mouthpiece of this view, and at the request of a group of members who were favourable to the choice of Mr. Forster as leader in the House of Commons, communicated it to Lord Granville himself. Some correspondence ensued.

DR. PLAYFAIR TO LORD GRANVILLE.

ATHENÆUM CLUB, PALL MALL, S.W., *January* 15, 1875.

'MY DEAR LORD,—I called upon your Lordship at the request of Fawcett and some other independent members to express their views as to the leadership in the House of Commons.

'They amounted to this: that they would resist any attempt to nominate a leader without consultation of the whole body of the

Liberal party in the House; but that they would sacrifice their own opinions as regards individuals, and co-operate heartily with any leader who on the whole was most acceptable.

'They thought that the best thing to do was for the Liberal members to be summoned to a meeting (in the usual way by Adam), and to discuss frankly the situation and see if there were any common agreement.[1]

'Forster, who was in the club when the deputation came to me, was asked by me to assure them that Gladstone's late Ministry had no intention of dictating any leader for acceptance.[2] This was very gratifying to them, but they still asked me to call on you and express their views that there should be a meeting of the party.

'Yours truly,

'LYON PLAYFAIR.

'P.S. The real meaning of the anxiety expressed is the following: Lord Hartington is looked upon as a nominee of Harcourt and James, to be used in the equational proportion—Lord George Bentinck : Disraeli :: Hartington : Harcourt. That is at the bottom of the agitation. But there is enough spirit of conciliation for the "independents" to accept Lord Hartington or A., B., C. provided it is done openly and with the concurrence of the party.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO DR. PLAYFAIR.

SAVERNAKE FOREST, MARLBOROUGH, *January* 16, 1875.

'MY DEAR PLAYFAIR,—I have received your letter of the 15th. Pray assure Mr. Fawcett, and the other independent members to whom you allude, that I am aware of no intention or wish to nominate any leader of the House of Commons without consultation of the whole body of the Liberal party.

'The efforts of the meeting held at my house on the 14th were concentrated on the attempt to prevent Gladstone's resignation, and no allusion was made to the future, farther than a general agreement to the effect that, if the decision was final, it was better to publish it without delay, in order to give the Liberal party time to consider their position before the meeting of Parliament.

'I am not authorised to speak for Lord Hartington, but I know no one more impressed with the difficulty of anyone taking Mr. Gladstone's place. I cannot answer for his acceptance, if the choice

[1] The Right Hon. William Adam, M.P., then one of the principal whips of the Liberal party, to whose courage and patience the victory of the party in 1880 was largely due.

[2] The Reform Club is the club to which allusion is made.

were made of him; but I am certain that he would refuse, unless the proposal was made with the hearty concurrence of the party.

'I cannot take upon myself to summon a meeting, but I have written to Adam to say that I presume if he receives a requisition to that effect from a few of the leading independent members he will act upon it. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

A second letter requested the omission of the paragraph of the above letter which related to Lord Hartington in any use which might be made of it by Dr. Playfair, who replied as follows :—

DR. PLAYFAIR TO LORD GRANVILLE.

4 QUEENSBERRY PLACE, SOUTH KENSINGTON,
*January* 17, 1875.

'MY DEAR LORD,—I luckily had done what your second letter requests, i.e. I sent a copy of your Lordship's letter without the paragraph as to Lord Hartington. I thought that had better be left out, because Fawcett and his friends are strongly in favour of Forster as leader in the Commons. At the same time, if there were any general consensus in favour of Lord Hartington, they would give him loyal support under the strong necessity that the party should be united.

'My own impression is that the feeling for Forster grows rapidly stronger—and curiously from opposite causes. The Scotch members favour him because he gave them on the whole a Liberal and unsectarian Education Act. The Irish members incline to him because he was so very denominational in his English Act. Disraeli's Endowed Schools Bill of last year was practically in its consequences a Bill for re-establishing Forster with the Dissenters, and now Dissenting members (as you will see by their organ, the *Daily News*) are working for him. Forster himself does his best to discourage this rising feeling—with what success I do not know.

'In one thing we are all agreed without any dissent. You are our political chief, whoever is our leader in the Commons.

'Personally I incline to Forster, though I would willingly work under Lord Hartington. 'Yours sincerely,

'LYON PLAYFAIR.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

BOWOOD, CALNE, WILTS, *January* 17, 1875.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—Playfair wrote to me the evening before last, at the request of Fawcett and other independent members, to express their views on the vacant leadership.

'They would resist any attempt to nominate a leader without consultation of the whole body; but they would sacrifice their opinions as to individuals, and heartily co-operate with any leader who was found to be most acceptable.

'They thought a meeting of the party should be summoned for free discussion, and agreement if possible.

'I assured him that I knew of no intention or wish to nominate a leader without consultation with the party. No allusion had been made at our meeting as to the future, excepting a general agreement that, if the decision was final, Gladstone was right to publish it at once, in order to give the party time to consider their position. That I could not take upon myself to summon a meeting, but that I would write to Adam, to tell him I presumed he would accede to any request made by leading independent members to that effect.

'As Playfair had made some allusion to Hartington in a confidential postscript, I said that I could not answer for Hartington, but that no one was more impressed than he with the difficulty of anyone taking Gladstone's succession. That I did not know whether, if the offer was made, he would accept or not, but I was sure he would refuse unless there was hearty co-operation. 'Yours, G.'

Mr. Gladstone, like Dr. Playfair, took the view that on his own retirement Lord Granville would become leader of the party, and that practically he had passed on the *bâton de maréchal* to him.

'I look upon you [Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville] as a Liberal all round, if ever there was one. Forster's talents are great, some of his gifts remarkable, and his integrity and sincerity beyond all praise; but he is, in my opinion, Liberal (in the sense of forty years back) over about half the circumference. In economy, peace and war, national vanity, territorial aggrandisement, he partakes, I think, the follies of our countrymen. On education he has strong prejudices of the Arnoldian form, which Arnold, surviving, would likely enough have cast off; and in the governing overmuch, and the propagandism of a vague philanthropy, he might go constantly astray. In popular franchise I heartily agree with him, and in the dislike of monopoly and narrow privilege. I know not whether in much else. . . .'[1]

Lord Granville, however, took the opposite view, and took it decidedly, that although the leadership of the party as a

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 21, 1875.

whole had been resigned by Mr. Gladstone, the leadership in the House of Commons only had to be provided for at the moment, and that the lead of the party was not in Mr. Gladstone's gift to pass on to him or to anyone else. The question of the leadership of the party would have, in his opinion, to be adjourned to the day when, a Liberal majority having been again constituted, the choice of the Sovereign created a Liberal Prime Minister. Who that person would be, Lord Granville never doubted for an instant; and holding that view, notwithstanding the gloomy vaticinations of some of his political *confrères*, he preserved an unruffled countenance. 'I have taken a sanguine view of politics all my life,' he wrote to Lord Carlingford, 'and should be sorry for my few remaining years to see things as gloomily as you do.'[1]

Lord Hartington and Mr. Forster both showed a perfect loyalty to the party, to each other, and to Lord Granville. There were difficulties, and they were great, but no suspicion of intrigue or ambiguity of language obscured the complicated negotiations which in the month of January 1875 were occupying the Liberal party.

Mr. W. E. Forster to Lord Granville.

Wharfeside, Burley-in-Wharfedale, Leeds,
*January* 19, 1875.

'My dear Granville,—I received your note just as I was leaving London.

'On Saturday I found Playfair with Fawcett and Holmes in the Athenæum Hall.[2] They told me that they were very anxious no leader for the Commons should be named without consulting the party, meaning, I suppose, that he should not be named by Gladstone's old colleagues. I said they need not be uneasy—our general feeling being, to the best of my belief, that we should keep in the background.

'Playfair said he was going to write to you and press a meeting. I said he had better write, and I am glad he did so, as your reply seems to have been exactly the right one.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Carlingford, January 17, 1875.

[2] Mr. John Holmes was the colleague of Mr. Fawcett in the representation of Hackney, and became a member of the Government formed in 1880.

'You ask me how I am now with the Nonconformists. I cannot tell. A week ago I should have replied, "Badly enough," but the last two or three days have surprised me—especially the leader in Saturday's *Daily News*.

'You may care to look at Illingworth's speech which I send you in yesterday's *Mercury*, on which you can form your own judgment. He was, you know, M.P. for Knaresborough; and, next to Richard and Miall, he most represents the strong Dissenters, and was the life of the opposition to me at Bradford last election.

'Will you be in London the end of this week or beginning of next? I have to go up for a day or two, and would gladly have a talk with you.

'I am most anxious not only not to do harm, but not to be made a means of harm. 'Yours ever truly,

'W. E. FORSTER.'

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

KIMBOLTON CASTLE, ST. NEOT'S,
*January* 21, 1875.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I return Playfair's letter. The more I think of it, the more glad I shall be if the party will consent to take Forster, and he will consent to take the place.

'My suggestion to you was not exactly that we should do without a leader; but that the Whigs or moderate Liberals should have one, the Radicals another, and the Irishmen a third. I think that there is hardly any important question on which the Whigs and Radicals will not vote against each other; "Disestablishment," "Household Suffrage in Counties," "Education," "Land Laws," &c.: and the position of a nominal leader seeing his flock all going their own way without attending to him, will not be comfortable. If each section had its own leader and its own organisation, it seems to me that there might be more real union and co-operation on points where we could agree, than if we were nominally united; when each section would complain and quarrel every time the party organisation was not used to support its views. However, this must not come from me, as it would look as if, not being able to get the leadership of the party, I wanted to get that of the Whigs.

'I still think that there is no necessity for your intervention at present. The active men are evidently for Forster. If they can get him accepted, so much the better; I would much rather that he should try what looks like an impossibility than that I should. If they fail, it will be from the opposition of the Radicals rather than

of the Whigs; and if the Radicals should then be obliged to come to me, it will be to some extent better than if I had been put forward by my own friends.

'Therefore I should let Playfair, Fawcett & Co. have their own way as far as possible. 'Yours very truly,

'HARTINGTON.'

*January* 22, 1875.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—You will remember that when I saw you a week ago in London, I told you that I thought it extremely doubtful whether the party is at present capable of anything like real organisation, and that the nominal leadership, whoever might undertake it, would be an extremely thankless and unsatisfactory task. I said at the same time that through the papers, and in various ways, we should probably in a week know something of the wishes and ideas of the party. The subject has certainly been sufficiently discussed in the interval; and everything which I have heard or read increases my disinclination to be brought forward as a candidate for the leadership. The difficulties and unpleasantness of the position seem to be ignored; and the party occupies itself in deploring not its own condition, but the deficiencies of its possible leaders. A duty which nothing but absolute necessity and loyalty to the party could induce anyone to undertake, is offered as a great favour to one or other of us, with many lamentations over our unfitness. Although, if it came to a vote, it is possible that the numerical majority might be in my favour, I cannot help seeing that if certain objections could be removed or diminished, Forster would be preferred. The position, which I have never coveted, would under such circumstances be intolerable. The objections to Forster would certainly be diminished if not entirely removed, if he were the only candidate in the field; and I shall be glad if you will say to Adam, and any other members of the party whom you may consult, that so far as I am concerned I decline to be placed in opposition to him. If Forster should wish to adopt the same course and to retire in my favour, I think it may fairly be urged upon him that the objections to him are not, as in my case, personal, and must be diminished, at all events, by my withdrawal; that, whatever may be done, there will be some irreconcilables who will break off; and that, being by almost general consent personally the fitter man of the two, he is more bound to face the difficulties and submit to the annoyances of the position than I, having only to look for a sort of toleration in consequence of certain accidents of my position, can be. I should wish Forster to be told that if he becomes leader, I for one should be willing to act

under him and to give him any support in my power. That we could vote together on all questions, I am afraid, is at present impossible; but that is one of the difficulties of the position, and would not be a greater one under one leader than another.

'Yours very truly,

'HARTINGTON.'

The opposition to Mr. Forster eventually proved far stronger than Dr. Playfair had realised. It is not necessary to take up the time of the reader with the details of the partly personal, partly political, negotiations which went on in the lobby of the House of Commons and the libraries of the Athenæum and the Reform Club, though now as forgotten as the incidents in the great struggle mentioned in the Arthurian legend which raged in and out of the forest of Celidon. Eventually Mr. Forster definitely announced his determination not to allow his name to be placed in competition with that of Lord Hartington, and on February 3, at a meeting of the Reform Club, Lord Hartington was selected to fill the position which Mr. Gladstone had vacated. Public opinion took the same view as the new leader himself as to the probability that his followers—notwithstanding all outward professions of loyalty—would before long be going some one way, some another; and a comic newspaper represented the new leader in the guise of a shepherd replying to the presentation to him of a shepherd's crook by Mr. Bright: '*But pray, master, where be the sheep?*'

'"And now let us talk of the state of the nation, or something that everybody understands." So says Squire Western with his usual wisdom. I am about to follow his example. [Thus wrote Lord Russell in March after these events.] The Whig party has hardly ever been so discomfited. Still there is a course which, perhaps not in my lifetime, but before very long, may lead them to permanent success. I should say this way consists in holding fast by sound principles, and never giving up, as Disraeli used to do, the support of good measures and resistance to bad ones, in the vain hope of getting the assistance of the extreme Radicals, or the Ultramontane Catholics, or the Home Rulers, or the men of a crotchet, in hopes to carry a snap motion. I say this, because I see there has been a very large minority in support of one of the worst private interests I know of, and which

I always resisted, namely, the interest of the lessees of Church property in Durham, in hopes of being able, by robbing in favour of landowners, to weaken the Church and diminish the *national property*, in favour of old abuses and shameful jobs. If you and Hartington and Forster and Selborne, and some two or three others, Goschen and Wodehouse, &c., will get together and put a curb on these mischievous and unprincipled motions, the character of the Opposition will be raised. If not, I shall never enter again the House of Lords.'[1]

Meanwhile Mr. Gladstone was glorying in his recovered liberty.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD CARDWELL.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *February* 13, 1875.

'MY DEAR CARDWELL,—I saw Gladstone to-day: in high spirits, boasting of not having felt so well for many years, and cordially anxious to be of any use he can to Hartington and his late colleagues.

'He was desirous of knowing my opinion as to where he was to sit in the Commons.

'It had never entered into his head that he could sit anywhere but in some such place as that in which Graham used to sit, but he had received an excellent letter from Bright which made him doubt as to what he ought to do. The pith of the letter was that it was Gladstone who had forced him to sit in the front bench, that he could sit nowhere else now, after having proposed Hartington and promised to give him all the support in his power, and he therefore had some right to expect that Gladstone would not separate from him.

'Gladstone said that he wished Hartington and me to decide what he should do—whether he should sit low down on the Treasury bench, or in Sir James Graham's place. That he left it entirely in our hands.

'I answered that I would consult Hartington, and let him know before Monday evening. That probably Hartington would have two conflicting feelings—"the regret at Gladstone's taking a seat

[1] Earl Russell to Lord Granville, March 12, 1875. The allusion is to an attempt made by some of the Liberal members representing the county of Durham to secure the intervention of the House of Commons in a lawsuit then pending in regard to the alleged right of the customary freeholders of the capitular estates to the reversion of the property. It ought to be stated that the leaders of the Liberal party declined to join in this attempt, and the motion was defeated.

which looked like a separation from his late colleagues, and on the other hand the anomaly of his (Hartington's) rising to speak for the party, with Gladstone sitting on the same bench."

'In point of fact, I believe that I am influenced more by the former objection, Hartington by the latter.

'Hartington is unluckily out of town. The only person to whom I have mentioned the subject is my brother, who inclines to Gladstone sitting in Graham's place.

'Pray let me know your opinion. I believe Peel remained on the front bench. 'Yours, G.'

Mr. Gladstone was eventually persuaded to keep his seat on the front bench. But for the moment his heart was elsewhere, engaged in the controversies to which he had persuaded himself he would devote the remainder of his life. He kept Lord Granville fully supplied with copies of his various publications as they successively appeared; and would seem to have even tried to entice him to plunge into the quicksands of theology. 'I never knew a paper,' Lord Granville wrote to him on one of these occasions, 'which *donne à penser* so much as yours on religious thought;' but everything, he thought, was not quite clear.

'I want to know in what way an agnostic differs from an atheist. The difference between him and a sceptic is made clear by your description, but you only give the point of resemblance between him and the atheist.'[1]

'*The religion of all sensible men*,' was said to have been the answer given by the Chancellor Shaftesbury to an indiscreet inquirer who wished to know to what faith he belonged. This 'religion of all sensible men' may be said to have been the religion of the Whigs, and could probably be traced historically to the school of critical thought which at the time of the Reformation arose in Italy. In most continental countries it was found to have a greater attraction for the nobles than the plainer and more stirring doctrines of Luther and Calvin, and it soon found a way into England. 'These nobles were numerous, wealthy, and independent. . . . They

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, June 8, 1876.

had received the best education of the time in foreign and especially German universities: they had caught the spirit of the Humanists, and when the signal was given from Wittenberg, ranged themselves eagerly on the side of reform. . . . They welcomed the Italian refugees as men of learning and refinement; afforded them the protection which the Free Cities of Germany and Switzerland had refused, and allowed them to preach and to print what they would.' Looking at religion almost exclusively from the intellectual and ethical point of view, they rejected alike the claims to authority of the Church and the extreme doctrines of Calvinism. The central point of Christianity was not justification by faith or satisfaction for sin by the death of the Saviour, but the resurrection which brought immortality to light. The short Epistle of James was of greater weight than the more numerous writings of St. Paul; and works were better than faith. In the churches and connections formed under this influence the critical spirit of the Reformation for the first time took a definite shape. But they were alike the 'red spectre' of Protestantism, and the quarry which the Jesuit reaction only too successfully hunted down on the Continent.[1] In England almost alone this school of thought survived as an active force, finding a shelter and refuge mainly in the universities and in the upper classes of society. The religious views of Milton's later days, the Cambridge Platonists, the Broad Church bishops and nobles of the eighteenth century, the Duke of Grafton and his once famous book,[2] Dean Stanley and Dr. Jowett, Dr. Priestley and Dr. Martineau, are all the varied offspring of this movement, which lasted as a power even in the Church of England well on into the latter part of the nineteenth century, and though stunted by the rise of the Oxford Movement and a distribution of Church patronage

[1] The Rev. C. Beard in the Hibbert Lectures for 1883, 'The Rise of Protestant Scholasticism;' Quinet, *Révolutions d'Italie*, livre iii. chapitre i., 'La Réforme en Italie.'

[2] *Serious Reflections of a Rational Christian from* 1788 *to* 1797, published in the latter year.

inimical to its views, still succeeds in existing, though not more successful as a popular religion than when it first saw the day amid hostile surroundings in Italy in the sixteenth century.[1]

Mr. Gladstone, whose tastes in theology were eclectic, was now urging Lord Granville to read the works of Dr. Martineau; but 'on the whole I had rather not attack Martineau,' Lord Granville replied. Perhaps he thought that Mr. Gladstone's letter ought to have been addressed to the congenial eye of Lord Russell. 'I reserve some remarks on agnostics,' he went on to say, 'till we meet;'[2] and then deftly passed by a not too abrupt transition to the more concrete question of the condition of the Christian population in Turkey, which was beginning to excite attention, and, as he well knew, had a singular attraction for the mind of the ex-Prime Minister.

[1] See articles in the *Theological Review*, vol. xvi. 1879, by the Rev. Alexander Gordon. The Protestant Church of Transylvania is the only Church still distinctly organised on this basis historically. It was founded by the Italian refugee, Giorgio Biandrata.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, June 10, 1876. At the end of chapter lxxxi. of Mr. Disraeli's novel, *Endymion*, one reads: 'as for that,' said Waldershare, 'sensible men are all of the same religion.' 'And pray what is that?' inquired the Prince. 'Sensible men never tell.' The passage is a reproduction of Speaker Onslow's footnote to Burnet's character of Shaftesbury in his *History of His Own Time* (Oxford, 1823), vol. i. p. 164.

## CHAPTER V

### THE EASTERN QUESTION

### 1876–1880

WHEN Mr. Disraeli, in 1874, for the first time received power as well as office, he was borne to the summit of his ambition by a popular reaction against the activity of Mr. Gladstone in domestic affairs, and by irritation at a series of mistakes committed on minor and now forgotten questions, some personal, others political, all of which had been cunningly exploited by the Opposition.[1] But the acute mind of the new Prime Minister was aware that a lethargic Ministry and a purely negative policy are seldom popular for long. Warned off the course of active legislation, as he considered he was for the present, he determined to seek in foreign affairs, and above all in the affairs of the Nearer East, a diversion for the unspent energies of the nation; and he concentrated his attention on this field with all the greater readiness because it was one which appealed to his own imagination, and was associated with the dreams of his earliest youth. The purchase of the Suez Canal shares in 1875 was a bold venture which in principle decided the future relations of Great Britain to Egypt. The proposal at once produced a divergence between the new and the old leaders in the House of Commons: an incidental result which the author of it possibly foresaw. Mr. Gladstone disapproved of the purchase of the shares, as also did Lord Granville. But Lord Hartington wrote that the purchase was being 'well received in the country,' and 'was likely to turn out a most successful *coup*,' and that any

[1] See *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 383–388, 465–472.

violent denunciation of it in Parliament would prove a mistake.[1] In this prudent view on the question of tactics Lord Granville agreed with Lord Hartington. 'Commercially,' Mr. Goschen wrote to Lord Granville, 'little could be said for the step taken. . . . But politically I confess I approve. Doubtless there is very great force in your arguments, but you do not deal with the risk of the shares being bought by others.'[2] Thus a grave subject of difference had at once arisen. Others quickly followed. Even if the purchase of the shares was unpopular in the country, Lord Granville did not think that the moment had arrived for attempting to turn out the Government; while Mr. Gladstone believed that the country was seething with indignation, and desired the instant ejection of the Ministers. The issue at this time of a circular dealing with the question of fugitive slaves, which appeared to draw back from the well-established practice of the country to refuse their surrender when on board British ships, did for a moment indeed cause a great wave of anger to sweep over the country in 1876; but the Government quickly withdrew their false step, and the agitation subsided.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *December* 31, 1875.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—I am glad of an excuse to wish you and yours a happy New Year, and as many of them as is consistent with real enjoyment of life.

'I hear you are going to speak soon to your constituents, and you may like to hear of some communications between some of your colleagues.

'I remember Bessborough once writing to me at Paris:—

'"Miss —— is going to marry ——; and such is the perversity of human nature, that I shall not be surprised if she turns out a faithful wife." And he was right.

'If I acted on the same principle, I should expect you to be in favour of the purchase of the ten votes in the Suez Canal, and the ostentatious mission of Cave. But I doubt it.

'Seebohm, Cardwell, and I were together when the news came.

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, November 25, 1875.

[2] Mr. Goschen to Lord Granville, December 7, 1875.

We were all dead against it, though Cardwell somewhat relented. Goschen and Halifax were in favour, Forster doubtful, Lowe rather favourable, but both are now strongly opposed. Gladstone, as you may suppose, indignant.

'Notwithstanding the chorus of approbation in the press (always excepting the excellent articles in the *Economist*), I find there is a great undercurrent against what has been done.

'I am told that the sensible people in the City are opposed.

'What most of us settled to be desirable before the meeting of Parliament was not to commit ourselves to opposition, but to be critically oracular.

'It was in this sense that Hartington spoke.

'Gladstone and I got two letters from a gentleman of Sheffield stating that he was a Liberal, and calling attention to an article in a local paper, containing an extract from Admiralty orders in 1871, on the giving up of fugitive slaves within territorial limits; and asking us to relieve ourselves from the odium of such a statement.

'Gladstone answered that he had never heard of or seen such a document.

'I did not answer at all, for though my recollection was the same, very important things sometimes slip through a great office; and moreover, I am not sure that in strict international law, notwithstanding James and Harcourt, we are justified in receiving fugitive slaves within the territorial limits of countries where we have acknowledged domestic slavery.

'Upon private inquiry, I believe that I am not responsible for anything of the sort, but that there were at that time existing instructions of which I do not know the date.

'I cannot conceive the instructions of this year to be justifiable; but it will probably be safer, in discussing the merits of the question, not to give it too party a character.

'Pray understand that I am only supplying you with a few facts, and have not the presumption in the slightest degree to influence your much better judgment. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Coming after the purchase of the Canal shares, the assumption by the Queen of the additional title of Empress of India in 1876 still further marked the evolution of British policy. A dim consciousness that a new departure was at hand made the proposed assumption of the title the cause of heated debates, and of an amount of opposition which, on the merits of the case, in the judgment of Lord Hartington,

was exaggerated, although he objected to the proposal itself as uncalled for and unnecessary.[1]

'It is now nearly forty years since I first entered her Majesty's service [Lord Granville told the House of Lords]; and since the time that I first took part in public affairs, I cannot say how much I feel the political confidence given me by her Majesty. I have received from her Majesty marks of personal confidence which have loaded me with obligations which I cannot discharge to the end of my life. Though I think party feeling has some advantages, no party feeling could induce me to do anything that would in the slightest degree impair the dignity and position of our Queen. It was not unnatural, when this question was first raised, that this proposal should have been considered as one not only of a simple but also of a beneficial character; but the light which discussion has thrown upon it, and I will also say the excitement which is felt on the subject, make it impossible for one to believe that we are not going to do something which will tarnish and damage the grand old secular title of the Queen, and that, by damaging that title, we may in a slight degree impair the position of her Majesty herself. I should feel utterly unworthy of the past favours of the Sovereign, and utterly unworthy of the position which I have been allowed to hold in this House, if I under that honest and sincere conviction remained neutral in the discussion which has taken place.'[2]

Mr. Disraeli had forfeited whatever claim he might have had to the indulgence of the Opposition, by neglecting to communicate with their leaders in regard to the change of the royal style, in the manner which experience had shown to be desirable, if controversy was to be avoided, in matters affecting the dignity of the Crown. Lord Granville reminded the House of Lords how in 1840 Sir Robert Peel and the Conservative party had supported Colonel Sibthorp's motion to reduce the annual grant to be made to the Prince Consort by two-fifths—that is to say, by 20,000*l.*; but competent judges were of opinion that 'the mortification which the refusal of the proposed vote was likely to occasion the Queen might have been avoided by proper communication beforehand between Lord Melbourne and the leaders of the

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, December 7, 1875.
[2] *Hansard*, ccxxviii. 864–5.

Opposition.'[1] When shortly afterwards the question of the precedence of the Prince Consort was introduced by Lord Melbourne, the first proposals on the subject had to be abandoned owing to the opposition of the Duke of Wellington, who had not been consulted: afterwards the latter gave way, and a settlement was arrived at, but in a different way from that first proposed. On the other hand, Lord Granville was himself able to quote two occasions—though he forbore to describe them in detail—when he and Mr. Gladstone had communicated with Mr. Disraeli and Lord Cairns on analogous matters with good results—in the avoidance of public controversy. This, Lord Granville pointed out, was quite a different thing from communicating on purely political questions.

'I remember [he said] an anecdote told me by Lord Russell, who, having written a letter to Sir Robert Peel asking him what course he intended to take in reference to the nomination to the Speakership, got a curt answer from Sir Robert Peel. Lord John Russell sent the letter to Lord Melbourne without observation, and Lord Melbourne returned it with the note: "Peel is a very bad horse to go up to in the stable."'[2]

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE QUEEN.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *February* 24, 1876.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty.

'He has seen all his late colleagues excepting the Duke of Argyll and Lord Selborne.

'It is most unlucky that, under the great pressure of business at this time, Mr. Disraeli should have omitted to follow in the continuous stream of precedents relating to any parliamentary proposals affecting your Majesty's dignity or comfort.

'In the case of the Prince Consort's title, of the Duke of Edinburgh's marriage, Prince Leopold's annuity, and many other occasions, communications between your Majesty's Government and the leaders of the Opposition led to good results.

'Mr. Bright before speaking asked Lord Hartington whether there had been any communication from her Majesty's Government on the subject. The Speaker put the same question. On this

[1] *The Early Years of the Prince Consort*, by General Grey, p. 276.

[2] *Hansard*, ccxxviii. 857.

question the members of the House of Commons have committed themselves both publicly and privately.

'Lord Granville found them keenly alive to the annoyance of having said anything which ran counter to your Majesty's wishes, and they have considered very carefully how they can shape their future career consistently with the opinions they hold, and to which some of them have given utterance.

'They do not think it would be necessary to satisfy the feeling which was shown in the House, that your Majesty's titles should be inserted in the Bill itself; but it would be considered a very graceful act, and not inconsistent with your Majesty's prerogative, if your Majesty was to authorise Mr. Disraeli to announce your intentions. The House would thus be put practically in the same position as Parliament was at the Act of Union.

'They have found a unanimous expression of opinion adverse to the particular title of "Empress," and there are reasons to suppose that this adverse opinion is not confined to the Liberal party.

'With regard to the colonies, your Majesty would probably hear what Lord Carnarvon thinks might be the feeling created by the omission or addition of any title relating to them.'

CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *March* 18, 1876.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty. Although your Majesty was good enough to write to him on the subject of the Royal Titles Bill, he has great doubts whether he is entitled to address your Majesty again on the subject. He feels this the more strongly as he cannot announce a state of things which would be most agreeable to your Majesty.

'Your Majesty can hardly be aware how strong Lord Granville finds the feeling to be both among the moderate and the more advanced members of the Liberal party on the subject of the Bill. There is no member of your Majesty's late Government who could stem this feeling, even if he did not share it. The result is, that when the vital question is raised by one or other of the amendments which will be moved, they will find themselves in the painful position of voting against your Majesty's wishes, and there is no doubt that there will be a previous searching discussion.

'There are two ways of viewing the title proposed: first, whether it is a right or an inexpedient measure; second, whether, if it be desirable in itself, it is worth being taken in the face of a formidable opposition.

'If by any chance it should seem fit to your Majesty and to your Majesty's Ministers to give more time for a calm consideration of this matter, which has grown so much in importance, Lord Harting-

ton would press Mr. Disraeli, on general grounds, to adjourn or postpone the consideration of the Bill.

'Lord Granville will not expect any answer from your Majesty, unless by any chance you would desire that Lord Granville should encourage Lord Hartington and his late colleagues to take this course.'

The high considerations of constitutional practice which were thus discussed between the Queen and Lord Granville, and the arguments which in both Houses were brought forward by the Liberal leaders against the Bill, failed nevertheless to produce any marked effect. The Bill passed into law, and the wits of society pretended to foresee a dim possibility that the country might yet be further startled by another unexpected *coup* capping that of the Prime Minister—the result this time of the theological studies in which the ex-Prime Minister was still partially immersed, and out of which he might draw his revenge.

'Sidonia made a Duke his reign to grace;
William another, on a change of place;
Ben followed with an Empress: let us hope
That William will not cap him with a Pope.'

Meanwhile, and pending further developments, Lord Granville kept together his supporters in the House of Lords by motions on such matters as the grievances of the Nonconformists in regard to the right of burial in churchyards and the vexed question of the lawfulness of marriage with the sister of a deceased wife. In these controversies a considerable body of independent peers could generally be found to support the advocates of change on the Liberal benches. On May 15, 1876, Lord Granville actually found himself in the proud and entirely novel position of leader of a majority; for, in a full House, he succeeded in carrying a motion affirming that it was desirable to remove the Nonconformist grievances in regard to burial, by a majority of 142 to 92.[1] This victory, if without immediate result, paved the way for the changes in the law made a few years afterwards by Mr. Gladstone's Government, as it proved that, on this question

[1] *Hansard*, ccix. 588–605.

at least, a majority permanently adverse to reform no longer blocked the road in the Upper House.

In 1875 the Eastern question had been reopened by the insurrection in the Herzegovina. Mr. Disraeli, throughout the long series of events which followed, identified his conceptions of Imperial policy with the support of the Sultan of Turkey and an almost open contempt for the sympathy of the nation with the Christians of the Balkan Peninsula. Subsequently he embarked on a fatal repetition of the expedition of 1846 into Afghanistan. It is probable that but for these errors he would have died Prime Minister of England. Opposition to the progress of Russia Lord Granville recognised —whether wise or unwise—would have ranged the nation on the side of the Government, if that opposition had not been made almost synonymous—so far as the Prime Minister was concerned—not only with the defence of Turkey in Europe, but with a sort of lame apology for the misgovernment of the Sultan himself.

In 1877 Mr. Gladstone was proposing to issue a pamphlet on the atrocities committed by the Turkish troops in Bulgaria.

'. . . When some little time ago you threw out the suggestion of a pamphlet [Lord Granville wrote to him], I did not express any opinion in favour of it, for the reasons I mentioned yesterday. But the case is different now. Northcote has deprecated for the present parliamentary action. Hartington has given reasons which have been generally approved for our not moving at this moment. On the other hand, Derby last Tuesday again attributed the "horrors" to the feebleness of the Turkish Government, whereas it was the only thing in which they have shown any energy. Grey last night described as exaggerated Argyll's account of the misgovernment of Turkey. It would therefore not be unreasonable to let the public know the real state of the case. . . .'[1]

One phrase in the pamphlet slightly alarmed Lord Granville's prudent mind. It was that in which—borrowed, as some have said, from the repertoire of Sir Stratford Canning in 1821, if not from some even earlier source—Mr. Gladstone declared the removal of the Turks from Europe 'bag and

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, February 27, 1877.

baggage' to be the only effective solution of the situation.[1] On the other hand, Lord Russell was pushing on Mr. Gladstone, and complaining that Lord Granville and Lord Derby were neither of them sufficiently outspoken. He made an effort to go up to the House of Lords to speak. 'I can hardly believe,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'that he intended to go up. He is utterly unfit for any such exertion. He says that he is for Mr. Canning's policy—making friends with Russia and Greece, and turning the Turk out of Europe.'[2] 'The old man,' Lord Derby wrote to Lord Granville, 'is as full of energy as ever, however bodily feeble. We neither of us seem in favour with him just now.'[3] The pamphlet soon appeared.

'Gladstone was here for a week in the highest force [Lord Granville wrote shortly afterwards to the Duke of Argyll]. His pamphlet has had an immense success. I told him that the only objections I had to it, and to his speech, were his cutting and drying a little too much what was to be done, and his strong invitation to the Russians to advance. I have always thought the Crimean War was a mistake, and might have been avoided, if either Aberdeen or Palmerston had had their own way; but the doctrine you laid down I think in two articles of the "Edinburgh," viz. that we did not fight for the Turks, but to keep the Russians from playing a dangerous part, was sound; and I think both Gladstone a little, and Lowe especially, are making too light of giving Russia a material standpost in European Turkey. Austria is and has been behaving selfishly, but we ought to secure a European agreement, and not one between us and Russia alone. . . .'[4]

'Which is the strongest force in this country,' he went on to ask the Duke, 'is it hatred of Russia or of Turkey? . . . I might criticise your sneer at Hartington and me, and your assertion that we had not read the papers, and your rather ostentatious repudiation of party ties; but I am mollified by the practical retribution which has followed, in your being generally described as the man most actuated by party motives. I believe you and Gladstone have done

[1] 'As a matter of humanity I wish with all my soul that the Sultan were driven bag and baggage into the heart of Asia.' (*Life of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe*, by Stanley Lane Poole, i. 307.)

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, July 2, 1876.

[3] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, August 3, 1876.

[4] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, September 14, 1876.

a great good in the pressure which you have brought successfully upon the Government. I trust they will not be sent back again by what they believe to be a reaction in public opinion. I do not agree with Gladstone in the wish to turn them out. Even if it were possible, I cannot conceive anything less desirable at this moment.' [1]

Lord Granville's objections to the policy of the Government could be summed up in a sentence. He objected to the veiled support of the Porte, on which it was based. Anticipating the criticism of Lord Salisbury, made many years after the event, he thought the Turk was 'the wrong horse on which to stake our money.' Yet it was no part of the duty of the Opposition, in his opinion, to propose a cut-and-dried policy. When in 1876 the German Government had issued the so-called 'Berlin Memorandum,' containing proposals or suggestions for the solution of the Eastern question, he held that the British Government were justified in rejecting them as insufficient, but that they ought to have met them with a counter-proposal of their own. He nevertheless did not favour the wish to make the refusal of the Government the ground of a formal vote of censure,[2] and abstained from any public expression of blame. There is reason to believe that Mr. Gladstone held a different view. Public opinion swung backwards and forwards from day to day, pulled in different directions alternately by hatred of Turkish misgovernment on the one hand and dread of seeing Russia in possession of Constantinople on the other.

'. . . I always thought [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone a few months after the appearance of the pamphlet] there would be some reaction to the great excitement of the early autumn, but I did not expect it to come so soon and so strong. I am not sure whether it is not better that it should have come soon, as it gives time to a counter-reaction before Parliament meets—there are some symptoms of this already. . . .' [3]

The Prime Minister meanwhile maintained his *sang-froid.* Lord Granville met him at Crichel.

[1] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, October 24, 1876.
[2] *Hansard*, ccxxxii. 22.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 18, 1876.

'I had never met Dizzy in a country house before last week [he wrote to Lord Hartington]. He was exceedingly civil to Lady G. and me. He discoursed to Lansdowne and me, conceiving us to be as great aristocrats as ——, on the origin of noble English families. He was occasionally clever and amusing, but I do not think him a really good member of society. He seems to lack ease. Whether owing to love for Lady ——, or to the complications of the Eastern question, he was very absent. Upon Lady —— blowing him up violently for trumping her best card, he pleaded that during the third rubber he always began to think of the East. Bunny judiciously asked him if he minded Gladstone's attacks. He said: "No, I like it: it is a proof of his angry and bitter envy." He told me that the small number of a Cabinet was invaluable—that it made Ministers so united and so anxious to do their fair share of work.'[1]

Lord Hartington's position as leader of the Opposition was at once affected by Mr. Gladstone's reappearance as an active politician. A great meeting had been held at St. James's Hall, at which Mr. Gladstone spoke, on December 8, 1876, and it gave rise to many differences of opinion.

'The speeches [Lord Hartington wrote] were perhaps with a few exceptions more moderate than might have been expected. But nothing was said, even by Gladstone, to repudiate the extravagances of Freeman and one or two others, and the whole thing seems to me to be more or less discredited by them. But putting the extravagances out of the question, I do not recollect anything that was said, that was either new or useful. All the old anti-Turk abuse was warmed up again, a good deal of unnecessary confidence in Russia expressed, and all the difficulties carefully ignored. What is the practical result of it all? If it was intended as a demonstration that the country would not stand Lord Beaconsfield's pro-Turk speeches and policy, I think that it has been a failure. I have not, of course, seen many people, but the few moderate Liberals I have met disapprove altogether of the conference, and are rather more inclined than they were before to support the Government. . . . I feel certain that the Whigs and moderate Liberals in the House are a good deal disgusted, and I am much afraid that, if he goes on much further, *nothing can prevent a break-up of the party*. . . .

'The accounts look as if the Turks were going to make it comparatively easy for the Government; for if they refuse all concessions, there will be no temptation to back them up, and to involve us in

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, October 27, 1876.

any obligations towards them. *But I don't feel the slightest confidence in Russia*, and I think that it would be a mistake to base our policy in any degree on Russian assurances. If Russia should occupy the provinces, I doubt whether, under certain circumstances, the Government would be wrong in taking some steps for the protection of Constantinople and the Bosphorus; and this would certainly be a material though indirect assistance to Turkey, and would, I suppose, be objected to by Gladstone and the pro-Christians. Austria, I should think, if encouraged by us, would be inclined to take the same line; i.e. might apply a strong pressure on Russia to leave the Provinces after the reason for the occupation has ceased.

'It seems to me that in some shape or other this question is sure to come up for us. If the Turks are reasonable and the Russians exacting, the case will be stronger for taking precautions; but are we in any case to look on at Russia establishing a footing in Turkey, and more or less threatening Constantinople, without any security but the Emperor's assurances? The danger with the present Government seems to be that they may encourage the Turks, and lead them to expect that we shall do more than this. I should not have objected to a protest, however strong, that we will not fight to maintain the Turkish Empire; but the Conference people appear to be so anxious to get rid of the Turks, and so confident in the good intentions of Russia, that they don't care to look at what may follow the destruction of the Turkish Government.'[1]

It was probably the consciousness of the growing difficulties between Lord Hartington and himself which made Mr. Gladstone persist more than ever at this time in alluding to Lord Granville as 'leader.' Lord Granville with equal determination steadily disclaimed the ephemeral honour, being only confirmed as time went on in his belief that the return of Mr. Gladstone to the leadership of the Liberal party was certain and inevitable.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

HOLMBURY, WOTTON, DORKING, *May* 27, 1877.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I have done my best to think of a suggestion for a prophylactic action on your part, but none occurs to me. Lord Grenville said that "the person who showed most sport would always be the real leader of the Opposition."

'If that person besides being an ex-Prime Minister is the ablest

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, December 18, 1876.

man in the House of Commons, who has during nearly fifty years accumulated an amount of experience, consideration, and hold upon the country, which no one else possesses, he cannot change by any disclaimer, however sincere, what appears to every one to be the facts of the case, or avoid the responsibility which attaches to the position he has taken. 'Yrs. G.'

After the failure of the Conference at Constantinople, where Lord Salisbury represented Great Britain, war was declared by Russia against Turkey in April 1877, and early in the session Mr. Gladstone gave notice of his intention to move on the Eastern question in the House of Commons.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *March* 18, 1877.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—My own opinion is not in favour of the proposed motion; but as "you think it a necessity," Hartington believes it unavoidable in some way or other, and Forster, Lowe, Harcourt, Charles Howard, Freddy Leveson, and I am told Bright and Goschen, approve of it, there only remains to discuss to-morrow what will be the best way of bringing it on.

'Forster wishes to bring it on, and believes there will be few defections. 'Yrs. G.'

In April accordingly Mr. Gladstone gave notice of five resolutions; but it was found that no unanimity could be secured in the party. The Liberal front bench disapproved of four of them, and a section of the party thought the whole of them inopportune. On May 2 Lord Granville had to convey to Mr. Gladstone the opinion of the majority of his old colleagues that it was not opportune at this moment to move, and suggested a vote for the previous question as a way out of the difficulty.[1] Eventually—and mainly through the intervention of Lord Granville—a compromise was arrived at. The last four resolutions were withdrawn, and the first was modified in such a manner that it secured the support of a united party. Such changes of front are not made on the field of battle and in sight of the enemy with impunity, nor without being accompanied

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, May 2, 1877.

by humiliating circumstances. Even if they present a way out of immediate difficulties, they carry the seeds of future recrimination and discord. So it was on this occasion. Although the speech of Mr. Gladstone in stating his case rose to the greatest heights of which human eloquence is capable, and for the moment covered the difficulties of his party with the mantle of his passionate indignation against the cruelty of the Sultan's Government and the cynicism which pretended to disbelieve in it, yet the quarrel in the party was none the less but dormant, because behind the question of the misgovernment of the Sultan lay the larger issue of the good faith of Russia and her future intentions. Meanwhile the position of Lord Hartington in the House of Commons became more and more difficult, and his correspondence with Lord Granville is the record of the ever-recurring expression of his desire to retire, now that disagreement on the main issue of the time had rendered the united action of the party impossible in a House where he was exposed in consequence to a daily risk of collision with the late Prime Minister and with a large section of his own followers. Lord Granville was therefore principally occupied throughout 1877 in preventing an open rupture. On the one hand he had an almost unlimited personal devotion for Mr. Gladstone. On the other he was fully conscious that the situation in the House of Commons was insecure, and that Mr. Gladstone, by his nominal retirement and almost immediate reappearance as an active politician, had placed his old colleagues in a false situation, which Lord Hartington had to tolerate. There were great meetings to denounce the Turkish Government, and Mr. Gladstone traversed the country addressing enormous and enthusiastic audiences, but Lord Granville did not feel certain how far these meetings represented the national feeling.

'The important thing [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Bath] now appears to be to strengthen the hands of the moderate members of the Government in preventing war and measures leading to war. Those who can put themselves forward with the greatest effect for this purpose are moderate Liberals, moderate Conservatives, and commercial

bodies—chambers of commerce and other non-political bodies. Avoid questions of Turks and Russians, and concentrate effort on the avoidance of war, increase of taxation, and depression of trade.' [1]

Lord Hartington also was sceptical how far the great meetings which Mr. Gladstone addressed represented the permanent opinion of the country. 'Mr. Gladstone,' he said, could 'never be made to understand that people who listen to him and admire his speeches don't necessarily agree with him.' [2] There were further differences of opinion as to the relative importance to the Liberal party of the Eastern question and other subjects. Lord Granville had to acknowledge, after a visit to Bradford, that whatever was the case at a public luncheon in the afternoon, the mass meeting in the evening did not 'care twopence about the Eastern question, county franchise, or anything else, but only "Miall and disestablishment."' [3] On the other hand, Mr. Gladstone was thinking of the Eastern question and of the Eastern question only. It was proposed at this moment to hold a great meeting at Birmingham, at which Mr. Chamberlain was to preside, and the difference of view which Lord Granville had noted at Bradford at once made itself felt at Birmingham also.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

HOLMBURY, DORKING, *May* 21, 1877.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I find from your letter that I misunderstood you when some time ago you showed me Chamberlain's letter. My recollection was that it was a very well written letter, in which he invites you to Birmingham, as an exception from their rule of not inviting strangers to their political meetings; that he stated that the object of the meeting was partly to keep alive the feeling of the country respecting the Eastern question, partly to reorganise the Liberal party. But I only read it in a hurry, and may have misapprehended the pith of it. I understood you to say that if you went, it would be to speak on the Eastern question and to keep yourself aloof from the other portion of the programme. I presume that Chamberlain's object is not to reorganise the whole Liberal party, but to strengthen the young Liberal and more advanced portion of

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Bath, December 22, 1877.
[2] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, October 13, 1877.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, September 4, 1877.

it, and to secure you, willing or unwilling, as leader. I have no ground of complaint against Chamberlain for wishing to do this. But knowing, as I believe I do, what your wish is, I am much afraid of misconception on the part of the public. 'Yrs. G.'

Mr. Gladstone, however, wrote to Lord Hartington saying that 'he had never been able to understand the cause of the late split in the party; and that he hoped nothing would be said at Birmingham about his being a leader, or he shall be obliged to be very explicit in an opposite sense.'

'Now it seems to me [Lord Hartington wrote commenting on this letter] very clear why the split took place, and equally clear that if he does not see it, it will occur again before long. The fact is that when he chooses to lead, he must be the leader of the party, and that since the autumn, and now, he has chosen to lead, and no amount of disclaimers will alter the fact, though they may in his opinion relieve him of some of the responsibility which attaches naturally to leadership. So long as you and I have any responsibility for the management of the party, I think that we cannot altogether submit our judgment to his, and in that case some will follow him and some us. Hence the split in the past; and here are the materials for more splits in the future. Can nothing be done to make him see this, and let us understand where we are?'[1]

Meanwhile the Russian army was advancing.

'I hear Dizzy has been using the most violent language, [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone] 'telling the Ambassadors that he is desirous of peace, but that his hand will be forced by the national feeling, and that he will have to land 300,000 men in Turkey!'[2]

The crisis in the Liberal party soon became acute. Parliament was about to meet, and it was proposed by the members of the advanced wing of the party that there should be an amendment to the Address. 'You may have thought from my manner yesterday,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Hartington, 'that I was insensible to your troubles and difficulties, but you would have been mistaken. I feel them deeply.'[3]

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, May 25, 1877.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 21, 1877.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, January 30, 1878.

The defeat of the Turkish armies in January, and the advance of the Russian army into the immediate neighbourhood of Constantinople, caused an outbreak of feeling in England which recalled the days of the Crimean War. The hatred of Turkish misgovernment, at least for the moment, was mastered by the dread that the Balkan Peninsula might be only exchanging one bad master for another. The Cabinet was torn by dissensions between the advocates of a policy of action and those of moderation. Lord Carnarvon and Lord Derby resigned, and Lord Salisbury, unexpectedly identifying himself with the policy of the Prime Minister, became Foreign Secretary. The reconstituted Cabinet decided to ask for a war vote of several millions, and the British fleet under the command of Admiral Hornby passed up the Dardanelles. Lord Hartington considered the vote a reasonable insurance against possible risks. Mr. Gladstone considered it 'a foolish and mischievous proposition.'

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE, PICCADILLY, W., *January* 29, 1878.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I am sorry to say that, after considering the matter as well as I can, I have come to the conclusion that not only am I unable to move an amendment negativing the vote, but also I could not vote for it.

'I have only time now to state, in the shortest and most imperfect manner, my reasons for this conclusion; but they are mainly these.

'1. I should look upon a vote of want of confidence in the Government at this moment, if it could be carried, as a very serious evil. It is impossible that we could form a Government with the present Parliament, and a dissolution in the course of the next few weeks would utterly paralyse the influence of the country at a critical time.

'2. I am not able to condemn altogether the general policy of the Government since the outbreak of the war. I accept the policy of conditional neutrality, and I accept the conditions as well as the neutrality. Faults may be found in details, but it seems to me that they have not departed from a strict neutrality till the conditions were nearly touched; and they have succeeded in convincing the Turks that for them, or for the maintenance of their Empire, they were not prepared to fight.

'3. I think that it is not unreasonable that we should place our-

selves in a state of *moderate preparation*, in anticipation of the probable events of the next few weeks. It does not appear to me a question of going armed into a conference. It is rather a question of looking on at two armed Powers treating separately on matters concerning our interests. The other two Powers most closely concerned, Germany and Austria, have, from the circumstances of their position, the means of intervening with effect whenever they please. I cannot think it wrong that we should be placed in a position to use whatever power we may possess, without delay.

'If you should consider it necessary, I would come and discuss these points, but I see no advantage in doing so. I am aware that I disagree with almost the whole of my late colleagues, and also the great majority of the party. I might very probably be silenced in argument, but I do not think that my opinion could be changed.

'A compromise, by which a resolution might be agreed to which would not directly negative the vote, would, I think, be unsatisfactory. I do not believe that the majority of the party will now be satisfied with anything short of a direct negative, and I feel that there is a difference between myself and the majority of the party, which, if not now, must shortly make itself felt.

'They, I believe, virtually hold that no English interests in the Black Sea are involved for which we ought to fight. I, on the contrary, think that circumstances may arise in which it would be our duty to fight. My own opinion is that the best course would be that I should, in whatever way may be thought most desirable, resign the leadership, and leave my colleagues to take their own course.

'I do trust that Mr. Gladstone may find it in his power to resume the leadership, at all events until this crisis is over. He must be aware that it is he who has formed and guided the opinion of the Liberal party throughout these transactions, and I think that he ought to be at its head.

'I cannot conceal from myself that I have not been able in this question to lead, but have rather followed a long way behind.

'Yours very truly,

'HARTINGTON.'

When the Vote came up for discussion in the House of Commons on February 7, upon a motion to go into Committee of Supply, Mr. Forster moved an amendment, but it was withdrawn under the effect of the report which arrived in the midst of the debate, that the armistice, which had been agreed upon in the last days of January, had been broken, and

that the Russian army was again in full march. Although the report eventually proved to be unfounded, the apprehensions out of which it had originated remained, and the motion to go into committee was carried by 295 to 96. The vote itself was ultimately carried by 328 to 124. Lord Hartington, Mr. Forster, and the Liberal leaders walked out. About eighteen of their followers, believing that this was an occasion when it was the duty of a member of Parliament to have a definite opinion, voted with the Government rather than abstain.

Lord Hartington now once more wrote expressing a strong desire to retire from the leadership of the party in the House of Commons.[1] A proposal on the part of the Government to call out the reserves increased the differences yet further. Sir Wilfrid Lawson moved an amendment that there was no need to call them out, and made his speech an opportunity for an attack on Lord Hartington, in which among other things he declared that the 'noble Marquis had been rattened by a number of the gentlemen who sat behind him.'[2] The amendment was negatived by 310 to 64, but among the 64 was Mr. Gladstone.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *April* 10, 1878.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—I found as I expected that you were flown. I should have liked to tell you how good your speech was, and how glad I am that you took the line you did.

'Otherwise I have been in as bad a temper all day as you were yesterday.

'I met Gladstone just now in Regent Street. He had turned his hat in order to save the front part from the rain, but in deference I suppose to me, on taking my arm, he put it right. He then told me that I should not guess where he came from—and you will be equally surprised with me to hear that it was from a public meeting of working men (the very last place to which he was likely to go). He then described to me his speech, which explained the effect of the debate, the impracticability of Wilfrid Lawson, and hardship upon you.

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, February 9, 1878.

[2] *Hansard*, April 8, 1878, ccxxxix. 894.

'I dare say this may be useful; and I said I was glad that he had said anything in that line, for I considered the proceedings of last night one of the heaviest possible blows to the discipline of a party I had ever remembered.

'He apparently agreed with all I said—told me that Bright had first been on his own account, and secondly on his (G.'s), to dissuade him—that Wilfrid Lawson had aggravated the offence by the tone of his speech; but that the personal obligation to vote (as the amendment was moved) was imperative as regarded himself.

'I suspect he is really sorry, and has done his best to make amends to-day, with what skill we shall be able to judge to-morrow.

'I hope to see you to-morrow or Friday, as I am going to Holmbury with rather a bitter taste in my mouth. 'Yours, G.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *April* 11, 1878.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—If your castigation was not more severe than is reported in the *Times*, Wilfrid Lawson will survive it, especially after having established the principle invaluable to a crotchety man, but destructive to the unity and influence of a party, that although a particular amendment is disapproved by large majorities of every section of the party, yet some of the best men in it, concurring in the objection, feel a personal obligation to vote for it, because it contains a sentiment in which they agree.

'Is not Lawson in the position of an Old Bailey lawyer, who successfully insists on a witness answering "Yes" or "No" to a catch question?

'It was probably an additional satisfaction to Lawson that he should have forced twenty-nine Liberals to vote against him.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

It was fortunate for the Liberal party that differences of opinion were not confined to the front Opposition bench. 'In 1854, during the Crimean War, a celebrated statesman in the House of Commons,' Lord Granville reminded the House of Lords, had 'with great truth and accuracy' described two different theories as existing in regard to the Eastern question: each maintained by persons of great authority.

'There were those—and Lord Palmerston was one of them—who believed that Turkey is a country not only qualified for



Geo. Richmond R.A. Pinx.

T. L. Atkinson Sc.

*Lord Granville*

*1876*

Emery Walker Ph. Sc.

independence, but absolutely capable of progress. Statesmen of this school, upholding these views, have been of opinion that with wisdom and with firmness Turkey might form a substantial and a real barrier against Russia. Then there is the other school, which believes that there is no vitality in Turkey—that it is decaying and decrepit—that its resources, always imperfectly developed, perhaps are now virtually exhausted, and that it is totally impossible for it long to exist as an independent community; and these statesmen, not wishing to hand over this rich prey to a powerful neighbour, have been of opinion that by encouraging the Christian subjects of the Sultan, and by advancing the civilisation and the rights of those classes, you might in time prepare a population for Turkey which would prevent that intermediate state of anarchy which otherwise would happen between the fall of a great Empire and the rise of a new Power.'

The tenor of Mr. Disraeli's own speech on that occasion—for he was the speaker—was entirely in favour of the first theory. But about four years afterwards, a rising statesman in the House of Commons, whose subsequent career had entirely justified the high hopes founded on this speech, had expressed himself strongly in favour of the second theory. The irony of events, Lord Granville went on to point out, had brought it about that the first of these statesmen was now Prime Minister, and the second, owing to the resignation of Lord Derby, was now Minister for Foreign Affairs; and each, so far as could be judged from their recent conduct, especially the conduct of the Minister for Foreign Affairs when acting as plenipotentiary at Constantinople, held the views he had expressed at an earlier date. But those were contradictory views, and it was not to be wondered at if under the circumstances the course of the Government had been marked by vacillation and hesitation.[1]

The influence of the Prime Minister for the moment prevailed over that of the new Foreign Secretary. How war between Great Britain and Russia was in 1878 but narrowly avoided, how the Treaty of Berlin was substituted for the Treaty of San Stefano, how Turkey had none the less to submit to enormous amputations of territory, is part of the history of Europe rather than of the biography of any

[1] See *Hansard*, ccxxxix. 786.

individual, unless it be of Prince Bismarck, the author and sponsor of the memorable international instrument drawn up at the capital of the German Empire. 'The spendthrift, having got rid of the greater portion of his paternal acres, at last is able to boast that he has placed his property within a ring fence.' In these words, spoken in reference to the gradual shrinkage of the Turkish Empire in Europe since the Peace of Carlovitz, Lord Granville had in 1875 almost anticipated the terms of the peace which with unconscious humour had to be defended by official apologists in Parliament as a 'consolidation' of the Turkish Empire.[1]

The Treaty of Berlin, it was asserted by the panegyrists of the Government, brought peace with honour, but it was quickly discovered to have only diverted the sphere of Russian activity from the Bosphorus towards the frontiers of Afghanistan and India. Simultaneously affairs in South Africa entered into a new and dangerous phase. In 1877 the Transvaal had been annexed; in 1879 Zululand was invaded. 'We have been making annexations at the rate of about one a year since the present Government came into power,'[2] Lord Granville told the House of Lords: where was it to end?

'With thee in thy camp is the Empire,' the German poet, in lines worthy of a better cause, had sung in 1849, apostrophising the aged Radetzky; 'the rest are mere units.' The words exactly described the *rôle* of the aged Prime Minister on whom the stability and the coherence of the Cabinet in 1879 entirely depended. Rumours indeed were current of dissensions, and as to the Prime Minister himself being ill. He was 'said by the newspaper hacks to have gout in the mouth, that he lived a dreadfully isolated life, having no one to speak to; and that he rose at seven, dined at two, and went to bed at nine.'[3] But with all that he, and he alone, was the Government.

'What I cannot help being engrossed with now is the Afghan difficulty [Lord Granville wrote to the Duke of Argyll]. I have

[1] *Hansard*, ccxli. 1875. [2] *Ibid.* ccxliv. 1691.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, October 3, 7, 1878.

seen Lawrence, who is miserable on the subject, and I think with reason. He speaks more strongly than he wrote in his letter to the *Times*. Northbrook and Halifax appear to agree entirely with him as to the policy, but Northbrook does not seem to think the expense of the war so dangerous to Indian finance as he does, and both of them are more in favour of vindicating our prestige. I am very glad that Gladstone abstained from giving an opinion whether we ought to fight or not. The only chance of our not getting into a great scrape is the Ameer giving way, which would give undeservedly what is called a great diplomatic triumph to the Government, but which I am afraid is not likely. Lawrence thinks that in the spring our military measures would be certainly successful, but will cost 30,000,000*l.* or 45,000,000*l.* But then what is to be the result? The Government will be supported by the Indian feeling, and by all the Jingoism here; but they may get a great shake, and the Liberal party is certainly not fit at present to take their place. Lawrence says he would prefer seeing the Russians in Cabul, to the expense of the war being thrown upon Indian resources. But the argument in the *Spectator* has also much weight, that if you pay for Indian wars, Indian Governments will be constantly getting you into them.'[1]

The same views will be found more fully developed in the following letters.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *September* 30, 1878.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I have been in communication with Lord Lawrence, who is in the Isle of Thanet, and coming here for a night to-morrow. He is in despair about Lytton and his policy. He has written a letter to the *Times*, which I see is not yet inserted; they probably keep it back, in order to have an article against it.

'His opinion must have great weight, and is entirely free from the objections to which our utterances are liable. How the Russians must chuckle over the whole matter.

'Do you agree with Fawcett in his letter to the *Daily News*? It appears to me unanswerable.

'Halifax condemns the policy to the utmost, but insists on the necessity of chastening the Ameer. I must know a great deal more on the matter before I commit myself to such an opinion. But I feel we may do much mischief in saying too much in the other sense at present.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

[1] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, October 9, 1878.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *October* 30, 1878.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—A thousand thanks for *Kin beyond the Sea*. It appears to me to be excellent. I trust you will have it reprinted in a separate form here.

'The criticisms on your having given your opinion that the States will supplant us as the workshop of the world, appear to me absurd. But I am not sure that I agree with you. The States have immense advantages in the extent and fertility of the soil, their inexhaustible mineral wealth, and their free institutions, but is it clear that they will always remain united? If they separate, they may begin fighting each other with hostile armies and hostile tariffs; and unless we go on conquering Afghanistans, and civilising Asia Minors, I do not see why we should disappear like the commercial populations of Holland, Venice, and Genoa have done.

'As a rule our good sense is as strong as that of other people, and our prosperity may increase at least as fast as it has done, notwithstanding the rapid development of other States.

'There are some home truths about our constitution, which I am glad you enforce.

'I forget whether I told you how much I liked your *England's Mission*. . . . 'Yours, G.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD GREY.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *November* 10, 1878.

'MY DEAR GREY,—I am glad that you give me an opportunity of thanking you for the public service you have rendered by your letters to the *Times*.[1]

'Whether it be owing to the strength of the case, or to your strong convictions upon it, I have never known you do anything better either in writing or speaking.

'I got your letter of the 6th yesterday, but too late to answer it.

'I am one of those who agree entirely with you and Lord Lawrence. I do not know any political friend of any weight who does not do so, condemning the policy of Beaconsfield, Salisbury, and Lytton, but many are shaky on the point whether, being in the mess, it is possible to avoid war, in case the Ameer does not give way.

'Halifax has never completely retracted his first opinion, that, notwithstanding the folly of the policy, our prestige prevents our withdrawal.

'Hartington was when I last saw him of that opinion. It was the conclusion to which Argyll and Northbrook came a few days ago,

[1] As to Lord Grey's letters, see *Annual Register*, 1878, p. 178.

notwithstanding their complete condemnation of what has been done.

'With such examples as these, it is difficult to foresee how far we shall get an agreement if Parliament were immediately summoned.

'My opinion has hitherto been, to get as many experts as possible, such as Lawrence, Northbrook, Adye, and Argyll, to enlighten the public on the question. An expression of opinion from such men as you is also invaluable.

'I doubt whether party politicians speaking without special knowledge would not do more harm than good.

'The Bulgarian atrocity meetings, which had a great effect at the time, and cowed the Government, subsequently proved that if a simultaneous effort of this character is made in the autumn, it spends itself.

'The Government will only call Parliament together if it suits them, if they feel sure that their enormous majorities are practically unbroken, and they can throw the responsibility of their policy upon Parliament, and have their own way triumphantly.

'They have now almost as complete an organisation for meetings as the Liberals have, and unfortunately Jingoism is not yet extinct.

'As at present advised, I incline to the opinion that while such meetings as that of Northumberland should be advised to adhere to the line you propose, it would be a mistake to adopt as a party move simultaneous assemblies over the whole country.

'The remedy for the present state of things is to upset the Government or to recall Lytton. The Government is too much in Lytton's power to do the last. I doubt whether anything but a disaster can shake its own power. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

The temporary popularity which the Government had gained at the time of the Treaty of Berlin was now steadily diminishing. Nevertheless Lord Granville did not think the moment had yet come for a change of Government. The divisions in the Liberal party were still too serious, for if abroad they related to the frontier policy of India, at home they were equally felt in regard to the extension of household suffrage to the counties.

'I am of opinion [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Hartington] that, although silence will be found fault with, it is the best course for yourself and the *chose publique*. But I should not like you to follow exclusively my advice. There is no doubt our temperaments tally too

much on this point for us to be the best advisers of one another. . . . If there is to be a war, it will lead to great future Indian difficulties, and almost certainly be nuts to Russia; but it may turn out the Government, which I doubt being nuts for the Liberal party.'[1]

The condition of things thus indicated persisted all through the first six months of 1879. In July Lord Hartington wrote that the situation was worse than ever in the House of Commons, because he had 'had a row with Chamberlain and the Radicals.' Mr. Chamberlain had taken the opportunity of formally disclaiming his leadership, and although the situation was again patched up, it remained, to use Lord Granville's favourite word, 'unpleasant,' for in addition to every other trouble, the great disturbing factor, the uncertainty as to Mr. Gladstone's intentions, was always there.

'Forster will ask you your opinion as to Gladstone's intentions as to taking office [Lord Hartington wrote in October]; he thinks that it would now not be impossible for me to get on as leader, with Gladstone in office as Chancellor of the Exchequer, and that it would strengthen us at the elections if he would say that he would return. Finance would of course give him a special and complete occupation for a time, and the anomaly of the position might not be so glaring at first; but I cannot conceive any arrangement of the sort lasting, or indeed any arrangement when Gladstone would be in the House and not leader.'[2]

In October Mr. Gladstone had an interview with a representative of the *Gaulois*. Shortly afterwards he was at Walmer.

'He brought the *Gaulois* with him [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Hartington], marked in pencil, and gave me an account of several trifling mistakes made in the statement. When he got to the bit about the resumption of office, he said what had passed was that the interviewer had asked him whether he should come back to power. He answered, "No." "But your countrymen will force you to do so," to which he responded by a gesture, which he repeated to me, and which looked like *Alors comme alors*. I have not liked to argue with you on a hypothetical case, but it appears to me impossible that you should form a Government without making an

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, October 7, November 4, 1878.
[2] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, October 28, 1879.

earnest attempt to combine all that is really strong in the party. It would be fatal if Gladstone could say, "I was not asked to join," or, "I was asked, but in such a manner as showed there was no wish to have me." It is impossible to say whether he would accept or refuse a subordinate place. If he refused, others could not resent it. If he accepted, I believe you exaggerate the impossibility of working together. The case of Government is different from Opposition.

'If the Government was once formed, Gladstone would lose much of his popularity and weight with the advanced party, and you would retain yours with the rest of the House. If he chose to lose his importance by coming to the Lords (which I do not believe), I should not object to his being first or second.

'I have sometimes asked myself the question whether, if I were you, I should press him *beforehand* to take your place. It would put you on velvet if he refused, as it is certain he would do. But the objection is that it would be an illusory offer, and an offer to do what would not be for the good of the party.'[1]

In December, Lord Hartington wrote that in his opinion the time had arrived when he ought to make Mr. Gladstone the offer which Lord Granville had, he thought, suggested,

'that he should resume the leadership; and, what is more, make it in such a way that he will not be able to refuse, or if he does, that the responsibility of leaving the party again without a leader will rest on him.'[2]

To this communication Lord Granville replied in the following letter:—

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

TRAVELLERS' CLUB, PALL MALL, S.W., *December* 6, 1879.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—Thanks for promising to communicate before any decision. I doubt whether you, or you and I, could take so important a step, off our own bats, without consultation with others. I hardly made the suggestion to which you allude; you raised the question, and gave an opinion against it. Circumstances have since brought the matter much more forward, and made careful consideration of it necessary. What we must honestly consider is, what will be the best for the party. On this there is much to be said on both sides.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, October 29, 1879.
[2] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, December 3, 1879.

'I doubt the *Spectator* being right about the beneficial effect of a change on the general election. Gladstone has got up an enormous amount of steam, which, if it does not evaporate during the next three months, will tell favourably for the Liberals. Your resignation would throw much cold water upon the party, and would be used with tremendous effect by the Tories and by the lukewarm Liberals.

'I do not see how you could make an irrevocable declaration and combine with it, throwing upon Gladstone the whole responsibility of leaving the Liberal party without any leader. Even if we agree to the form, the difficulty would be to avoid the appearance of hostility to Gladstone, and of some pique and jealousy. And there is truth in what you say, that he might possibly throw up Mid Lothian, and then the plot would thicken. . . .

'In reading over the letter, it looks as if I did not see the difficulties of our present position, which is certainly not the case.

'But your position in any case is a great one, whatever you may think.

'Yours, G.'

Two days after writing the above letter, Lord Granville received two important communications. The first was from Lord Hartington, the second from Mr. W. E. Forster.

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

SANDRINGHAM, NORFOLK, *December* 7, 1879.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—Possibly it would be a mistake to begin with an irrevocable resignation. What is essential is to start with a fixed determination to meet the refusal which would probably be Mr. G.'s answer, by resignation. But it is possible that he might not absolutely refuse. The arguments seem so strong that I do not see how he could refuse to consider them. I should either write to him directly or (which I should prefer) through you, something to the following effect. "The near approach of a general election makes it necessary to consider what is to happen in the possible event of the Government being placed in a minority. Would it be possible for either you or me to form a Government, in which I should be the leader of the House of Commons? I do not think that it would." It is clear that a great majority of the party will not be satisfied unless Mr. G. is the next Liberal Premier and leader of the House; and it is natural that it should be so. His eloquence and abilities, as well as his position in the country and in the House, and his popularity, point to him as pre-eminently the leader of the Liberal party. Nothing could have overcome this settled conviction on the part of the majority of the party except the

certainty that his health would not allow his undertaking the labour, or that he had definitely abandoned politics for other pursuits. With this conviction in the minds of a majority of the party, my position would be an impossible one. He knows himself the difficulties of leading the Liberal party : they would be enormously increased if in every case when things went wrong, many would honestly think, and many would maliciously say, that it would have been different if Mr. G. had been the leader; and if it were impossible to contradict them.

'Mr. Gladstone has done and would no doubt continue to do much to prevent this feeling. But it has nevertheless existed, and has sometimes made my position very difficult. I feel that the difficulties of leading the House would be much greater than those of leading the Opposition, and the consequences of failure would be much more serious. In short there is not room for argument about the proposition that the man who leads the Liberal party out of doors ought to lead it in Parliament.

'The remarkable feeling which has been excited by his late speeches is to a great extent the expression of this conviction in the mind of the party. If we are convinced, as I think that we must be, that Mr. G. is the only possible Prime Minister, it seems to me that it is only fair to the Queen, to the country, to the party, and to myself that this should be acknowledged at once. Nothing can be gained by continuing an arrangement which we know to be an artificial one, and which must break down when exposed to the test of the responsibility which the Opposition ought always to have in view.

'I think that something of this kind would do to begin with. The real difficulty is what is to be done in answer to a refusal ; and it is with regard to this contingency that I think I ought to be prepared to insist on my resignation, whatever course he may take. It might then be necessary to speak a little more plainly and to point out that he must bear the responsibility of his own actions ; that he has almost continually since his resignation chosen to act in most important matters as the leader of the party out of doors ; that he has done so more conspicuously than ever during the last few weeks ; that such a course makes my position intolerable, of which I do not complain, but only point out in order to show that if he refuses to resume the nominal position which he now occupies virtually, the responsibility of leaving the party without leadership does not rest with me, but with the man who has created the position. But I hope this may be unnecessary. 'Yours very truly,

'HARTINGTON.'

MR. W. E. FORSTER TO LORD GRANVILLE.

WHARFESIDE, BURLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE, LEEDS,
*December* 9, 1879.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—Your kind note received this morning. It sets me much up in mind. I was intending to write to you about Gladstone. I hardly think matters can go on as they are. The *Daily News* of yesterday I see says that it is well that G. should be the popular and national leader of the party, while you and Hartington are the formal leaders. But if this position be possible now, will it be possible in office? When I was in London, Emly, *between ourselves*, told me he had seen a recent confidential letter from G. repelling almost as an insult the idea of his taking any subordinate office such as Chancellor of the Exchequer; but has he entirely put away from his mind the notion of being again Premier?[1]

'If he has, then certainly he ought to speak out more clearly.

'His words at Motherwell on Saturday are very coy: "And here let me say with respect to a kind expression that was used in one of the speeches addressed to me, that a return to place and power is no part of the purpose for which I have come here."

'He could not well say less; nevertheless I think that if Hartington asked him to resume the leadership of the House, he would refuse. But if matters are allowed to drift, I think he must drift back to his old place. It is a most difficult complication, and I have been trying to consider it all round.

'First, as regards myself, by far the least important consideration, but no man absolutely forgets himself—personally I would far rather follow Hartington. I get on better with him, I am more sure that I shall agree with him. But as regards you and H., but more especially H. as he is in the House, it is desperately hard on him that he should have had all this weary work for another, and especially, under the circumstances, for G.; but if I was guided solely by friendship for him, I should advise his asking G. to resume. His position is getting untenable, and the country would appreciate and the party never forget the generosity of the sacrifice.

'Lastly, as to the party, I cannot be sure whether the party would win or lose. Enthusiasm would be immensely increased by *his* ostensible lead, but some moderates would be lost. On the other hand, enthusiasm gains apathetic voters who otherwise do nothing.

'Up to now, we have done well; H.'s official leadership keeping with us the moderates, and G. exciting the enthusiasts, but still that depends on H. and you really leading.

[1] The Right Hon. William Monsell, created Lord Emly in 1874.

'The question after all is this—Is *he* or not the real leader? If so, he ought to take the responsibility.

'If either you or H. do communicate with him, I cannot help thinking the sooner the better, especially before his birthday, when he, I believe, makes a speech at Liverpool.

'Well, I send you my exact thoughts, but I fear not very clear, and therefore worth less than usual.

'Yours ever truly,

'W. E. FORSTER.

'P.S.—You may see I have not asked the really important question, is it best for the country that G. should lead?

'My reply would be decidedly, "Better for the country, safer and more conducive to real progress, that you and H. should lead, if *he* will let you; but worst of all that *he* should lead *without the responsibilities of leadership being brought home to him.*"'

A few days afterwards Mr. Forster developed his views still further in the following letter:—

MR. W. E. FORSTER TO LORD GRANVILLE.

WHARFESIDE, BURLEY-IN-WHARFEDALE, LEEDS,
*December* 14, 1879.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—Doubtless the difficulty is as you put it. If H. makes himself a declaration, unless it be irrevocable, it would appear—and might be—useless.

'But, if irrevocable, G. might meet it with a refusal, and the party might be left leaderless in the Commons, which would be the worst possible result, and in fact fatal.

'Would it not therefore better suit the exigencies of the moment for *you* to communicate with G.?

'How would it do for you to write him a letter saying that both you and H. earnestly requested him to resume the leadership, giving so far as you thought fit the manifest reasons; that you wrote at H.'s request; that H. did not write himself simply because he wished the question to be made as little personal as possible; but that H. thought, and you agreed with him, that the difficulties of his leadership had become insuperable, and, you might add, beyond what was reasonable to expect him to incur.

'Consider also whether you would not add, that, whatever the difficulties of leading the Opposition, those of leading the House would be far greater, and that it would not be fair either to the Queen or to the country, especially to the Queen, to wait till she

had to send for either you or H.—then for either of you to have to startle her by telling her that G. was the only possible Premier.

'The advantage of your acting in place of H. would in fact be that no irrevocable step would be committed, and yet the responsibilities of the difficulties of the position would be put where they ought to be—upon G. himself.

'Four things may happen:—

'1. Matters may be allowed to drift, which means the majority of the party will wish for G., and large numbers will ask for him: the minority will sulk in distrust of him, and in indignation at the treatment of H., and meddling enthusiasts will be constantly saying, "Why do not Granville and Hartington ask Gladstone to take back his proper place?"

'This would be bad.

'2. H. may give up, and G. refuse to come back.

'This would be worse—the party would be split up, and it would be almost impossible to avoid recriminations.

'3. G. might resume the leadership upon the earnest request of you and H., or—

'4. G. might pledge himself never to resume, or at any rate so positively decline as to stop the mouths of those who cry out for him.

'4 would be the best possible result if G. would fulfil its conditions.

'It may not be in his nature to do this, but the only chance of his doing it is his feeling the actual burden of the responsibilities of the present position.

'Excuse my writing so long a letter, but I am very anxious Hartington should not be damaged for the future.

'It may be necessary, though it *must* be dangerous, that G. should come back, but at any rate H.'s *successorship* to him ought not to be endangered.

'I entirely agree with you that the whole matter should be kept *very quiet*, and I will not come up unless you wish to see me.

'Yours very truly,

'W. E. FORSTER.'

While personal questions were still dividing the Liberal party in Parliament, the continued mismanagement of affairs in Afghanistan and South Africa was weakening the Government. 'The varnish is off them,' Lord Granville wrote, 'but the Opposition is not popular,' and he desired more time. There was now the unusual prospect of the small

phalanx which he himself led in the House of Lords being strengthened by new accessions—Lord Derby, Lord Bath, and a few other Conservative peers, who, discontented with the dangerous activities of their own leader, threatened secession. In 1878 Lord Granville had thought himself justified in sending Lord Bath an invitation to his official dinner at the opening of Parliament.[1] It was declined, but in a friendly spirit.

'I know no politics [Lord Bath replied to a renewed invitation] except to get rid of the present Government, and would do anything to conduce to that result; but so overt an act as to join your parliamentary dinner might injure rather than increase my power of usefulness. . . . I hear murmurings all round me, and from quarters where they were least to be expected. Men still support their party, but feel that it is an exertion to do so, and seem already preparing the discontent they will exhibit at their losses at the election. Salisbury's unpopularity has increased to an astonishing extent, and I begin to believe that if he takes office a middle party may be formed against him, in the possibility of which till now I had never any confidence. Derby strikes me also as gaining ground slightly. All these hopes or ideas are reasons against my taking any action that may separate me from those with whom I may be hereafter anxious to work. If the Conservative party is to be broken up, the Liberal one must be kept together; any split in its ranks would at present give cohesion to the other. I have discovered that Gladstone is the only Conservative statesman extant, a discovery that gives great annoyance to many of my friends, but in which some of them may at last be induced to believe.'[2]

It was now the general opinion that the Government 'was moving to its doom,' and Mr. Gladstone expressed the hope that the succession of Lord Granville, whom, he took this opportunity of telling Mr. Bright, he considered to be 'the leader of the party,' might be 'within a twelvemonth.'[3] But notwithstanding these and similar utterances no conviction really existed in the mind of Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, and Mr. Forster, that Mr. Gladstone would not resume office—much less that he would forego the Premiership—if the voice

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Bath, January 9, April 17, 1878.
[2] Lord Bath to Lord Granville, January 29, 1880.
[3] *Life of Mr. Gladstone*, ii. 583, 599.

of the country demanded that he should assume the first place, as they believed it would whenever the appeal took place.

'It is a choice of several evils [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Hartington]. On reflection, I think that if you or I approached him now, he would throw the whole responsibility upon us. He would say: "I do not like to change my determination, but if you both agree that it is necessary for or much for the good of the party that I should do so, and will cordially support me, I will sacrifice my wishes." Can we answer this appeal with perfect certainty now? Lord Cottenham told Prince Albert that it was generally better for a man not to make a will, because it was so difficult for him to foresee the exact circumstances at the time his death might occur. I do not know that the change of leadership would have an advantageous effect on a general election. Would Dizzy vote for it or not?'[1]

Lord Granville considered in fact that events must be left to find their own natural solution, and this solution he had throughout recognised must be the return of Mr. Gladstone whenever a change of Government took place. A meeting of the Liberal leaders was held at Devonshire House on December 16, 1879, at which in accordance with this view a decision was taken to make no formal communication to Mr. Gladstone. In the evening of the same day Lord Wolverton, formerly Mr. George Glyn, who had been Liberal whip in Mr. Gladstone's first Government, and was among his most devoted personal adherents, had an interview with Lord Granville, in which he informed him that—

'nothing would induce Mr. Gladstone to encourage or listen to any attempt which others might make to disturb the existing state of things as to the leadership, unless the wish was very clearly expressed to Mr. Gladstone by Lord Hartington and Lord Granville; and in that case Mr. Gladstone [so Lord Wolverton added] would demand full proof that their interests and that of the party strongly pointed to the reconsideration of his own position.'[2]

The best answer to this communication, Lord Granville told Lord Selborne, would be that which 'Dizzy made to Lorne,' when the latter very properly asked him for advice

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, January 2, 1880.
[2] *Life of Gladstone*, ii. 601.

as to the Letellier case which was sure to arise on his arrival in Canada: 'My dear Lord, as you grow older, you will find that affairs of State develop themselves,'[1] and the final development was not far off.

The Conservative party at this time gained two conspicuous victories at bye-elections in Southwark and Liverpool. 'It is a great moral blow,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'and gives people the notion that we are the losing and not the winning party. But,' he went on, his native optimism quickly reasserting itself, 'I doubt it being anything of a test.'[2] The quidnuncs of politics—always too apt to be guided by the opinion of the metropolis and the result of bye-elections—assured the Prime Minister that he had never been more popular, and that the country evidently was with him. Circumstances also seemed at the moment to point to fresh divisions being likely to arise in the Liberal party. A partial declaration in favour of Home Rule for Ireland by Lord Ramsay—the Liberal candidate at Liverpool—had spread great alarm in the ranks of the moderate section of the party. Lord Fitzwilliam threatened to withdraw his support in the Upper House and in the Yorkshire constituencies, and it was said that others would follow his example, thereby, it was thought by the Government, counterbalancing the effect of the secession of Lord Derby from the Conservative party in Lancashire.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD FITZWILLIAM.

*February* 1, 1880.

'MY DEAR FITZWILLIAM,—I found your letter last night. I cannot tell you the pain it has given me to receive such an announcement from one with whom I have been politically connected for some forty years, whom I have looked upon as a moderate but steady Liberal, and whose personal kindness to myself has been without a break.

'The task of leading the Liberal minority of the House of Lords has been a great honour to me, but it has not been easy. It would have been impossible without the indulgent support which I have received with few exceptions from my party.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Selborne, February 20, 1880.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, February 14, 1879.

'We are entering upon a critical session, and the reason you give for withdrawing a sign of confidence in me is one which does not seem to justify the step.

'The Home Rule question has never seriously arisen in the House of Lords; but in the Commons, Hartington voted and spoke in the strongest manner against a motion which, with an appearance of innocence, he thought encouraged the plan.

'I gather from the papers that Lord Ramsay, a clever, energetic young sailor, did not himself object to a committee of inquiry, which I suppose he thought might tend to enlighten men's minds about Home Rule rather than encourage them to support it. He kicked at a word which implied repeal of the Union. Later, I suppose by the advice of the local leaders, he made a compromise with the Home Rulers, which may or may not give him his seat.

'I do not see how the Liberal or any other party can be maintained if the principal and most important supporters of it stand aloof, because independent candidates who have never been in Parliament take particular lines on certain questions on the hustings. I believe that nothing can be less truly conservative in the result for the Whig aristocracy. 'Yours, G.'

In addition to these threats of secession, Lord Granville was greatly affected at this time by the loss of two of his greatest personal as well as political friends in the Upper House: the Marquis of Ailesbury and the Earl of Bessborough. The latter had for many years been principal Liberal whip in the House of Lords.

'You will have been shocked at poor Ailesbury's death [he wrote to Mr. Gladstone]. He had the greatest admiration and liking for you. He was an intimate friend of mine for more than forty years. It is another great link broken with the past. . . . Bessborough was a remarkable man, doing his duty in a sphere smaller than his great ability entitled him to. It is a very sad loss for me.'[1]

Such losses were specially serious at a time when, as Lord Granville had to confess, 'large classes were going against the Liberal party: county gentlemen, Jews, and Catholics.' Nevertheless he thought that 'the general feeling everywhere seemed good.'[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, January 7, 1878, January 30, 1880. Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 22, 1880.

Misled by the victories in Liverpool and Southwark and the rumours of Whig secessions, Lord Beaconsfield dissolved Parliament. The result of the elections was the complete defeat of the Government. Lord Beaconsfield immediately resigned. The outgoing Cabinet held its last meeting on April 21. On the 22nd Lord Hartington was summoned by the Queen to Windsor. In the evening he had an interview with Mr. Gladstone, the immediate object of which was by the Queen's desire to ascertain whether Mr. Gladstone would take office either under Lord Granville or him. This he said he would not do. Lord Hartington returned to Windsor next day and reported what had passed. The Queen then saw both Lord Hartington and Lord Granville, the latter of whom Mr. Gladstone still considered to have been wrongly passed by, as it was to him that in 1875 he had resigned his own trust. They conveyed their opinion of the situation to the Queen in a memorandum written by Lord Granville, of which the following forms part:—

18 Carlton House Terrace, S.W.

'Lord Hartington and I have acted in perfect harmony for the last ten years, and it is after very full conversation that we have come to the following conclusions.

'It is much to be regretted that Mr. Gladstone ever gave up the leadership of the Liberal party, against the strong wish expressed by us and by his former followers.

'I believe that he was perfectly sincere at the time, but circumstances, and the energy and earnestness of his character, brought him soon again to the front. Criticisms have been made on his conduct as an independent M.P., but the results of the elections have shown that he has a hold over the constituencies which no other man possesses.

'It is clear that age has not weakened his powers of work, and we believe it would be for the advantage of the Queen, of the country, and of the Liberal party, that he should be sent for by the Queen on the present critical occasion.

'Even from the point of view held by some, that there is danger from his exceptional ascendency, his course would be more easily controlled by the influence of the Sovereign, by the pressure of his colleagues, always so great upon every Prime Minister—whatever may be thought outside—and by his own increased sense of responsibility,

than if he were an independent member, with no official check upon his utterances, and subject to the stimulants which would be applied not only by the more advanced party and the Irish members, but by the greater portion of the able men who will be disappointed in not obtaining office.'

The remainder of the memorandum discussed in some further detail what the situation would be 'if Mr. Gladstone were sent for by her Majesty,' and either accepted or declined the task of forming a Ministry.

On April 23, Mr. Gladstone was once more Prime Minister of England. He at once offered the Foreign Office to Lord Granville, who accepted it. The European outlook was stormy.

'I really believe [Lord Dufferin wrote] that if the late Government had remained in office another year, we should have been in dispute if not at war with all the world. There is a fine bit of party spirit for you, but I thoroughly believe it.'[1]

Lord Granville was able to console himself with the reflection that he could now say of his political antagonists what he had had for many years to say of himself and his friends: 'The line of the Opposition, as it always is on foreign affairs, will be difficult.'[2] But whatever might be their difficulties, before the year was over it was evident that the Opposition intended to take the gloves off.

'The last time when I had the honour of speaking in this place [Lord Granville said at Hanley in November] was before a general election which has had important results. I was then in what is termed the cold shade of opposition. I am now in the full current of official life: a life in which the late Lord Hardinge used to say there were only two happy days—that on which a man came in, and that on which he went out of office. I cannot help thinking, from the tone and licence of speeches which I read, that there are some people in a desperate hurry to give us the last, and themselves the first, of these happy days.'[3]

Lord Beaconsfield did not long survive the fall of his Government. He died on April 19, 1881, at the house in

[1] Lord Dufferin to Lord Granville, August 17, 1880.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Bath, November 28, 1878.
[3] *Times*, November 28, 1880.

Curzon Street to which he had retired on leaving Downing Street. At the last dinner which he gave, Lord Granville was one of the guests. Their personal relations had always been cordial; and it has been seen that at one moment Mr. Disraeli had hoped that it was not beyond the bounds of possibility that Lord Granville would join his standard. The last occasion on which the late Prime Minister addressed Parliament was when the policy of the new Government in withdrawing from Candahar was under discussion. At ten o'clock on the second evening of the debate he sent Lord Granville word that he must speak at once.

'I sent back a strong remonstrance [Lord Granville afterwards told the House]. Two noble Lords who formerly held office, and a third with remarkable power of speaking, wished to take part in the debate. Lord Beaconsfield, however, persisted, and in following him I complained to your Lordships of what he had done. I thought at the time I was justified in that complaint; but it is with regret that I have since learned that just before my remonstrance Lord Beaconsfield had swallowed one drug and inhaled another in quantities nicely calculated to free him from his suffering during the time required for his speech. That Lord Beaconsfield has played his part in English history, that he had rare and splendid gifts, and great force of character, no one can deny. I doubt whether to many public men can the quality of genius be more fitly attributed. It was to his strong individuality, unaided by adventitious circumstances, that he owed his great personal success. Assisted by those social circumstances that Mr. Disraeli was without, I came into the House of Commons at an early age, and six months before he took his seat in that assembly. I thus heard him make that speech famous for its failure: a speech which I am convinced, had it been made when he was better known to the House of Commons, would have been received with cheers and sympathy, instead of with derisive laughter, but which, owing to the prejudices of his audience, he was obliged to close with a sentence which, like a somewhat similar ejaculation of Mr. Sheridan, showed the unconquerable confidence which strong men have in their own power. . . . Some men exercise influence over others by possessing in a stronger degree the qualities and the defects of those whom they influence; others produce the same effect from exactly contrary causes. It is probable that Lord Beaconsfield, with few prejudices of his own, and more or less tolerant of those of others,

belonged to the latter class. I never knew a greater master in writing in speaking and in conversation, of censure and irony. His long habit of sparkling literary composition, his facility in dealing with epigrams, metaphor, antithesis, and even alliteration, gave him a singular power of coining and applying phrases which at once laid hold of the popular mind and attached praise or blame to actions of the contending parties in the State. Lord Beaconsfield certainly had the power of appealing in his policy in his character and in his career, to the imagination of his countrymen and of foreigners: a power which was not extinguished even by death.'

Lord Beaconsfield, he finally reminded his audience, had only recently entered the House of Peers, at the end of a long and illustrious career in another place; but, he observed, in a deft compliment to the audience, as well as to the departed statesman, although

'it has been said of the British aristocracy, sometimes as a matter of praise, sometimes of blame, that they are proud, wealthy, and powerful; there is an element of a democratic character mixed with the constitution of the House of Lords, which has certainly added to its wealth and strength: possibly to its pride. It is the unexclusiveness which is peculiar to the institution. Of the smoothness with which the portals of this country roll back before distinguished men without reference to caste or to blood, of the welcome which is given to such, of the distinguished place which is assigned to him, I know no brighter or more brilliant example than that of Lord Beaconsfield.'[1]

Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville had agreed that the highest honours a nation can tender to the dead should be offered to his memory.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *April* 11, 1881.

'I agree about Beaconsfield; and if it is to be done, the more spontaneous it is the better.

'I should be glad if you were able to anticipate the proposal from the Queen and from the public. Should you not write to the Queen when it happens? I believe there is no hope. 'G.'

But, like Lord Russell, who, before he passed away in 1878 let it be known—as Lord Granville told the House—

[1] *Hansard*, cclxi. 4–6.

that he preferred burial among his ancestors at Chenies to all the glories of Westminster Abbey, Lord Beaconsfield had left directions that he preferred to be laid in the country churchyard of Hughenden: in the county which, as he was fond of observing, had already given five Prime Ministers to England,[1] whom he now went to join, confident—like the great Italian poet—that they would pay him all due honour,

'The sixth united to such genius rare.'

[1] Another version of the story makes Lord Beaconsfield only claim four Prime Ministers. This would strictly speaking be correct, viz. Mr. George Grenville, Lord Shelburne, the Duke of Portland, and Lord Grenville. Lord Beaconsfield may, however, have counted Lord Temple, who was sent for by the King in 1765, but refused to complete an Administration. The Duke of Portland was Prime Minister twice.

## CHAPTER VI

### MONTENEGRO AND GREECE

### 1880–1881

THE general election of 1880 was fought almost entirely on issues of foreign and colonial policy. The prominence given to Ireland in the letter which Lord Beaconsfield addressed as a party manifesto to the Duke of Marlborough—though, as the event proved, a remarkable instance of political foresight—at the moment struck no responsive chord in the hearts of the electors; while the Imperial ideas of the Prime Minister and his supposed desire to introduce changes into the working of the Constitution had excited general suspicion and alarm. The future of the Balkan Peninsula, the claims of Greece, the seizure of Cyprus, the expedition into Afghanistan, the annexation of the Transvaal, the policy of Sir Bartle Frere at the Cape, were the questions which most excited interest; and the attempt made by a small but active section of the Conservative party in the north of England, under the leadership of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd, to distract attention from these questions by a revival of the doctrines of Protection—thinly disguised under the name of 'Fair Trade'—proved entirely vain, in face of the interest aroused by Mr. Gladstone's speeches on the Eastern question. When, therefore, Lord Granville again became Foreign Secretary, 'the early and complete fulfilment of the Treaty of Berlin with respect to effectual reforms and equal laws in Turkey, as well as to such territorial questions as had not yet been settled in conformity with the provisions of that Treaty,' was, to quote the words of the Royal Speech in opening Parliament, the object to which he at once directed his attention.

The obstinacy of the Sultan in resisting reform, and his

skill in thwarting in detail the execution of the clauses of the Treaty, had been the standing difficulty of Lord Salisbury, and were not likely to prove a less formidable obstacle in the path of his successor; and there was always the danger that—as Lord Granville warned Lord Odo Russell—Turkey, if pushed too hard by the Powers, 'might crumble in our hands,'[1] and that the Eastern question might be reopened, and enter again on an acute phase. The weakness of the Sultan was his strength, and the Sultan knew it.

To complicate the situation at Constantinople still further, Lord Granville found on the very threshold of the Foreign Office two personal questions awaiting him, each of peculiar delicacy. One related to the position of Sir Henry Layard, who in 1877 had succeeded Sir Henry Elliot as Ambassador to the Porte; the other affected the Prime Minister himself.

Sir Henry Layard was among the most valued of Lord Granville's political friends. Time had only riveted the links forged in an earlier chapter of their lives. Sir Henry Layard had also a special claim on the Foreign Office owing to his knowledge of the East, and on the Government for his services in Parliament and abroad. But though no thick and thin defender of the Porte, as a remarkable despatch from his pen at this time abundantly proved, Sir Henry Layard could not be an adequate mouthpiece at Constantinople of a Government of which Mr. Gladstone was the chief.[2] If, however, a new interpreter for a new policy had to be found, the distinguished career of Sir Henry Layard in so many fields of public action could not be overlooked, nor could a change of policy at home be made the excuse, in the opinion of Lord Granville, for an implied censure on a public servant, who had faithfully—possibly only too faithfully—carried out his instructions. Against any suggestion of the kind all the chivalrous instincts of Lord Granville's nature rebelled. Sir Henry Layard was therefore not recalled, but received formal leave of absence from his post, and was replaced by Mr. Goschen, who went out *ad*

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, May 5, 1880.

[2] The despatch referred to above is dated Apri 27, 1880.

*interim* as special Ambassador.[1] Lord Granville's intention was to appoint Sir Henry Layard on the next vacancy to Rome, and then make permanent provision for the Constantinople Embassy, when Mr. Goschen's special Embassy was at an end. It was supposed that Sir Augustus Paget, the Ambassador at Rome, would not be unwilling to be transferred to St. Petersburg at the expiry of the five years for which such appointments are made, and that a post in many ways most suitable and congenial would thus be found for Sir Henry Layard. But these calculations proved to be mistaken. Sir Augustus Paget urged that questions of his own health and that of his family made it impossible for him to accept the transfer, and the followers of Mr. Gladstone raised a loud protest against a vacancy being specially created for Sir Henry Layard. The Government only escaped defeat in the House of Commons by the unwilling abandonment of the proposal, which Lord Granville persistently urged on the Cabinet as a debt of honour. Sir Henry Layard eventually received a retiring pension.

The second of the two questions presented yet greater difficulties. In the course of his fiery campaign in Mid-Lothian, Mr. Gladstone had more than once attacked the policy of Austria-Hungary in the East. On March 17 in the Edinburgh Music Hall, in language which would have been appropriate if uttered in 1850, he had said that 'it was impossible to put your finger on one point of the map where Austrian influence had been exerted for good;' and on the authority of an article in the *Standard* he accused the Emperor Francis Joseph of having publicly sided against him in the recent elections, and of having expressed a hope to Sir Henry Elliot, then Ambassador at Vienna, that the elections would result in a victory for Lord Beaconsfield, and that the electors would give their votes accordingly.

'If you approve the foreign policy of Austria [he exclaimed], the foreign policy that Austria has usually pursued, I advise you to do that very thing; if you want to have an Austrian foreign policy

[1] Lord Granville to Sir Henry Layard, January 14, 1881. (Turkey. No. 12. 1881.)

dominant in the councils of this country, give your votes as the Emperor of Austria recommends. What has that foreign policy of Austria been? I do not say that Austria is incurable: I hope it will yet be cured, because it has got better institutions at home; and I heartily wish it well, if it makes honest attempts to confront its difficulties. Yet I must look to what that policy has been. Austria has ever been the unflinching foe of freedom in every country of Europe. Austria trampled Italy under foot, Austria resisted the unity of Germany. Russia, I am sorry to say, has been the foe of freedom too; but in Russia there is an exception—Russia has been the friend of Slavonic freedom; but Austria has never been the friend even of Slavonic freedom. Austria did all she could to prevent the creation of Belgium. Austria never lifted a finger for the regeneration and constitution of Greece. There is not an instance—there is not a spot upon the whole map where you can lay your finger and say: "There Austria did good." I speak of its general policy; I speak of its general tendency. I do not abandon the hope of improvement in the future, but we must look to the past and to the present for the guidance of our judgments at this moment.'[1]

These utterances would under any circumstances have been imprudent in a probable Prime Minister. They were peculiarly so under the circumstances of the time, for they tended to irritate Germany as well as Austria-Hungary. The fear of the hostility of Russia—of which the indications, at first doubtful and obscure, gradually developed themselves in the course of 1879—had reluctantly persuaded Prince Bismarck and even the Emperor William that it was necessary to take serious steps to provide for the security of the Eastern frontier of Germany against a Russian attack. The Austro-German treaty of mutual defence, signed October 7, 1879, provided not only the means of common defence in the event of war, but also a fresh security for the maintenance of the peace of Europe as established at Berlin.[2] Any attack on Austria-Hungary at this juncture was accordingly regarded by the powerful statesman who directed the affairs of Germany as an attack on his own policy, and as affording so much fresh evidence of the ill-will to Germany

[1] The speech will be found in the *Annual Register* for 1880, p. 47.

[2] Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii. 233–236.

which the author, generally believed to be Mr. Gladstone, of an article in the *Edinburgh Review* of 1871 had, in his opinion, already betrayed.

'Austria has not the slightest intention of moving,' Lord Granville had written to Mr. Gladstone in 1877.[1] But Mr. Gladstone could reply that, willingly or unwillingly, Austria had moved into Bosnia; and he had now persuaded himself that she again was planning an advance, though possibly not an immediate advance, to Salonika, and was being pushed on thereto by Germany. He had further persuaded himself that the *Drang nach Osten*, which was the policy of the military and clerical party at Vienna, then at its lowest point of influence, was the special aim of the Cabinet at Buda-Pesth, although the Hungarian statesmen really dreaded nothing so much as the further increase of the Slavonic territories of the Empire-Kingdom. Even the occupation of Bosnia and the Herzegovina had been viewed with suspicion by the Magyars, and had impaired the hitherto unlimited popularity of Count Andrassy. Baron Haymerlé, a Liberal of 1848, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Empire-Kingdom, was himself the incarnation of the timid policy which has nearly always paralysed the councils of the Empire, and no statesman in Europe was less likely to raise the cry, 'Forward, to Salonika!' or even to listen to it, if he could find any decent pretext to avoid lending an ear.[2] From 1867 to 1879 the German Liberals had been in power at Vienna and formed the majority in the Reichsrath. By a succession of reforms—the existence of which Mr. Gladstone acknowledged—some of them perhaps a little in advance of public opinion, the so-called Bürger-Ministerium and the allies whom they had found in the Liberal section of the aristocracy of whom Prince Auersperg was the leader, had gone far towards turning the country of Metternich and Bach into a modern state. Though in 1879 partially defeated at a general

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 6, 1877.

[2] 'Haymerlé was on his way to execution in 1849, and was saved at the last minute.' (Grant Duff, *Notes from a Diary*, vol. i. 1881–1886.) Count Andrassy had been sentenced the same year *in contumaciam*.

election, they were still the most powerful separate party in the Reichsrath. But although Mr. Gladstone regarded the effectual transformation of Austria into an aggressive Slav Power as impossible, and 'the effort as most unwise and very formidable for herself,'[1] and although he admitted that the institutions of Austria under the German predominance in the Reichsrath had been greatly improved, nevertheless he often spoke and acted as if Metternich were alive and Bach still in office. Thus by his Mid-Lothian speeches he succeeded in simultaneously offending the German Chancellor and the Austro-Hungarian Minister for Foreign Affairs, and also in alienating the Liberal opinion then dominant in the Parliaments both at Vienna and Buda-Pesth, in which a Liberal Government ought to have found their best support on the Continent, especially at a moment when Prince Bismarck and Baron Haymerlé were both angling for British support against Russia.

'. . . Gladstone was quite wrong in his attacks upon Austria [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Hartington]; it was in opposition to what we agreed ought to be our line with respect to Austria; but he has no skin at all with respect to these attacks from royalty, and having begun he would not retract. He gives the real reason of the enmity of the foreign Governments to us—that they each believe the Tories will suit their purpose better. Bismarck's great object was *primo* to make Russia go to war with Turkey; *secundo*, to make us and Russia quarrel. The Tories have played more into his hands than we should do. Austria has the same policy in a more intensified degree. Both Governments are really Conservative in principle. The Emperor of Germany once told me that, though he liked me personally, I must not expect him to be against English Conservatives.'[2]

At a meeting held at the Shoreditch Town Hall on March 23, Sir Stafford Northcote had read a telegram from Sir Henry Elliot, stating that Baron Haymerlé was most anxious that there should be a contradiction, through the press or in Parliament, of the language attributed to the

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, October 3, 1883.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, April 5, 1880.

Emperor by Mr. Gladstone; and even before the general election was over, Lord Granville had become alarmed at Mr. Gladstone's speeches. Count Karolyi, a great Hungarian magnate of moderate Liberal opinions, was then Ambassador to the Court of St. James.

'I met Karolyi to-day [Lord Bath wrote from Longleat to Lord Granville about a month before the fall of Lord Beaconsfield's Government]; he was very violent about Gladstone's speech; in fact, worked himself into a passion, declared it infamous that a man who had been Prime Minister should speak in such a way of a friendly Power, and while he professed to be specially indignant at the Emperor being personally attacked, was evidently more angry at the statement that "you could not put your finger on one point in the map where Austrian influence was not exerted for evil," comparing her, so he said, to the spirit of evil. I replied that I ever regretted strong language, and regretted Gladstone's; but that the same and stronger had been used during two and a half years against Russia, even by Salisbury the other day at Manchester. He said Austria was not an aggressive power like Russia. I replied that that might be a matter of opinion, so far as Russia is concerned; that a man was at liberty to express any opinions; it was only the strength of language that was to be regretted. I added that Germany and Austria had allowed it to be supposed that they wish well to the present Government in the electioneering conflict; that their good wishes had been made use of by the Government party to strengthen themselves, and that those Powers if they permitted themselves to be drawn into our election affairs must not be astonished to find themselves attacked; that Montgelas had taken an active part in our politics, and had identified his Government with a party here.[1] He said Montgelas was no one; he would listen to no reason, and was very violent throughout; that if Gladstone came into office he should feel it due to himself to leave London at once. He also said, what it is my object in writing to tell you, that he should cut Gladstone if ever he met him, and I think it will be wise of you, when the Mid-Lothian contest is over, to give Gladstone a hint so that in case he knows Karolyi he should not expose himself to an insult.'[2]

[1] Count Montgelas, a nobleman of Bavarian origin, was at the time Secretary to the Austro-Hungarian Embassy. He was shortly after transferred to Constantinople; but his stay there was not prolonged, as he was dismissed the service in the course of the year. The statements in the *Standard* referred to above were in some quarters put down to the intrigues of this diplomatist.

[2] Lord Bath to Lord Granville, March 20, 1880.

The situation resembled that of 1859. 'My dear Karolyi,' Lord Granville wrote in a letter marked 'private and personal,' 'when I was in office and Rodolphe Apponyi in London, our intercourse was that of two colleagues in the same Cabinet. I had perfect confidence in him, and I believe he had the same in me.'[1] On this letter a friendly meeting ensued, and the first steps to a reconciliation were taken. 'I have not mentioned to Gladstone our conversation, which I considered quite private,' Lord Granville told the Ambassador, 'and I do not mean to do so, unless some unexpected necessity should arise.'[2] But the necessity was found to exist when Lord Granville re-entered the Foreign Office. After a considerable amount of correspondence, Mr. Gladstone was ultimately induced to undertake to withdraw his hostile observations, if assured that he had been misinformed. On this basis he consented to write a letter which was to be made public, withdrawing his charge against the Emperor of Austria. Of this communication Lord Granville would appear to have made the first draft, and to have submitted it to Mr. Gladstone.

'I do not think I can, at present, *volunteer* a declaration [Mr. Gladstone explained]. The Austrian *official* press has interfered *between* English policies. The Austrian Emperor has been stated to have done the same in a published statement (*Standard*) which must have been known at Vienna—especially at the English Embassy—and which was never contradicted. The aggressive views imputed to Austria are believed to have been encouraged by Lord Salisbury. Much "good indignation" has been bestowed upon me, but not (as far as I know) *one word vouchsafed disclaiming these aggressive views.* From independent quarters I receive assurances that I did not (when a private person) speak too much or too soon. In all that you say affirmatively for the Government I concur.'[3]

'. . . Our difference,' Lord Granville afterwards summed up the matter, 'is this: that you are more afraid of Austria, and I of Russia. I have no doubt of Austria having her ambitious views, and particularly her desires to have a share if there is a partition. But I believe she is at present sincerely

[1] Lord Granville to Count Karolyi, April 2, 1880. [2] *Ibid.* April 7, 1880.
[3] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, April 20, 1880.

desirous of things being quiet, and there is no concentrated national force, as in Russia, pushing her forward.'[1]

Count Karolyi was a man of conciliatory disposition. Fortunately also, notwithstanding his momentary outburst of indignation, he entertained a sincere admiration for Mr. Gladstone, and he succeeded in obtaining the permission of his Government to inform Lord Granville that the Emperor Francis Joseph had never attacked Mr. Gladstone's policy in the manner in which he was reported to have done by the *Standard*, and that the sole desire of the Emperor was to keep strictly within the limits of the Treaty of Berlin. A golden bridge was thus built for Mr. Gladstone, and he published a letter expressing regret at having used the language which 'upon secondary evidence' he had employed. 'This is the letter of an English gentleman,' is said to have been the comment of the Emperor Francis Joseph when the letter was submitted to him.

'I will not conceal from your Excellency [the letter ran] that grave apprehensions had been excited in my mind lest Austria should play a part in the Balkan Peninsula hostile to the freedom of the emancipated populations, and to the reasonable and warranted hopes of the subjects of the Sultan. These apprehensions were founded, it is true, upon secondary evidence, but it was not the evidence of hostile witnesses, and it was the best at my command. Your Excellency is now good enough to assure me that your Government has no desire whatever to extend or add to the rights it has acquired under the Treaty of Berlin, and that any such extension would be actually prejudicial to Austria-Hungary. Permit me at once to state to your Excellency that, had I been in possession of such an assurance as I have now been able to receive, I never would have uttered any one of the words which your Excellency justly describes as of a painful and wounding character. Whether it was my misfortune or my fault that I was not so supplied, I will not now attempt to determine, but will at once express my serious concern that I should, in default of it, have been led to refer to transactions of an earlier period, or to use terms of censure which I can now wholly banish from my mind.'[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 5, 1883.
[2] *Annual Register*, 1880, p. 64.

Thus the matter ended, and Count Karolyi lived to be enthusiastically spoken of by Mr. Gladstone at the time of the Home Rule controversy as '*our* Ambassador;' for, going perhaps a little beyond what is usual in regard to utterances by diplomatists on the affairs of the country to which they are accredited, he did not hesitate occasionally to compare the position of Hungary with that of Ireland, and then adroitly left his listeners to draw their own conclusions as to his opinions.

The immediate difficulty was over, but the Government, it was felt, had made a bad start, and although the incident itself was terminated, the ulterior consequences could not be foreseen; for there was a more formidable factor in European diplomacy than Baron Haymerlé, or than even the Emperor Francis Joseph. That factor was not at Vienna, but at Berlin.

In 1880 Prince Bismarck was at the zenith of his power and reputation. He virtually decided the foreign policy not of Germany only but of Austria and France as well. Napoleon at the height of his greatness had hardly been more powerful, and the first condition of any diplomatic success was to know his mind. 'At St. Petersburg,' Lord Odo Russell wrote to Lord Granville, 'his word is Gospel, as well as at Paris and Rome, where his sayings inspire respect, and his silence apprehension.' His influence at Constantinople was equally great; Prince Hatzfeldt, the German Ambassador, boasted 'that he carried the Sultan in his pocket.'[1] Nevertheless he knew that great dangers still existed. His 'nightmare' was a Russo-French alliance, and an invasion of Germany from the north and the west; 'which, if it did not break up the German Empire, would certainly ruin Germany for years to come.' Germany, the Ambassador reminded Lord Granville, had not yet recovered from the effects of the Thirty and the Seven Years' Wars, and it was only natural that a determination to prevent the repetition of these disasters should be the

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 27, 1880, September 16, 1882.

keynote of German policy.[1] Relieved of present anxiety on the side of France by the fall of Marshal MacMahon in January 1879, Prince Bismarck had viewed the fall of Lord Beaconsfield with unconcealed regret. The return to power of Mr. Gladstone he profoundly disliked, regarding him—notwithstanding the pamphlet on Vaticanism, on which at the time he had written Mr. Gladstone a complimentary letter—as the incarnation both in foreign and domestic policy of two opposite political forces, both of which he detested equally—clericalism and democracy. A union between these forces seemed to him to be at all times monstrous, but the conjunction in one person of a belief in liberty and High Church principles was quite incomprehensible. With perhaps conscious malice he once told Lord Odo Russell that one of his own ancestors had fought at the battle of the Boyne.[2] In his own *entourage* he described the new British Ministry as a coalition between Roman Catholics and Liberals such as he had to resist in his own Parliament and might have to resist again, and believed that in exact proportion as Great Britain was becoming democratic, she was losing respect for law and order. Meanwhile he expressed pleasure that Lord Granville had accepted the Foreign Office, as he had feared that Lord Derby, for whom he had an unconcealed dislike, might have been Lord Salisbury's successor. He also confessed his satisfaction at Mr. Gladstone's letter to Count Karolyi, but did so without the genial good-will of the Emperor Francis Joseph. The Court was more cordial. 'Gladstone's letter has produced an excellent impression,' Lord Odo Russell reported, 'and has reassured the German Emperor and his Government in regard to our future relation with their Austrian ally. The Crown Prince told me so yesterday.'[2] Lord Granville was not himself conscious of the existence of any important difference which need separate the two Governments in regard to foreign affairs; but he suspected Prince Bismarck 'of detesting us as Free Traders and Liberals belonging to a country whose press was hostile

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 29, 1880.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 15, 1880.

to his domestic policy,'[1] and ready again to co-operate with Russia against Western Europe.

'Eight years ago [Lord Odo Russell replied] you appointed me to Berlin, and I now welcome you again as my chief with feelings of heartfelt gratitude for eight years of perfect professional happiness and prosperity, for which I am indebted to you. To your predecessors in office I am indebted for very great kindness, support, and encouragement during the anxious period of their important Administration; and the friendly relations they had established during the Congress with Prince Bismarck has made their retirement from office a subject of much regret at Berlin. I am glad, however, to say that Prince Bismarck is now quite happy and reassured, since he knows for certain you have accepted the Foreign Office, and that the policy of England will be entrusted to your hands and care during the coming crisis in Europe. I think you will find Prince Bismarck all you can wish, anxious for the most friendly relations with England, and willing to act in concert with her Majesty's Government when asked to do so. He earnestly desires peace for the welfare of Germany, and he likes the Anglo-French alliance, because he looks upon it as "the basis of peace in Europe." He dreads a Russo-French alliance against Germany, and makes up to France to keep her out of Russia's way, and he made the Austro-German defensive treaty to isolate Russia more completely. His dread of Russia is founded on the belief that the Panslavists are bent upon driving the Czar into war again, to wipe out the humiliation of having had to turn back from the very gates of Constantinople at the dictation of Europe; and he reckons on his defensive alliance with Austria to keep the Panslavists in check until the peace party return to power in Russia, when, according to circumstances, he will be equally willing to re-establish the "Drei-Kaiserbund," if he can see a guarantee of peace for Germany in it. Meanwhile Prince Bismarck looks upon England as the leading peace Power in Europe, and you will therefore find him well disposed to make common cause with her Majesty's Government if you should at any time require his services.'[2]

These considerations the Ambassador developed in a further letter, written from Berlin, May 8, 1880.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, March 2, 1881.

[2] Berlin, May 1, 1880; compare *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii. 233, *Unberechenbarkeit der Englischen Haltung.*

'I am very glad that you are going to insist, in concert with the Powers, on the execution of the Treaty of Berlin, by which means, I believe, the existence of the Ottoman Empire can be prolonged for some years to come. Before that treaty was signed, Bismarck was willing to support any settlement of the Turkish question on which the Powers most interested in Eastern affairs were able to agree, so as to insure the maintenance of peace among them. Since the signature of the Treaty, which he takes a paternal pride in, he has himself negotiated at Vienna the Austro-German defensive alliance, for the purpose, he says, of being better able to defend the stipulations of his Berlin Treaty against possible Russian encroachments. Personally he wishes Austrian influence to prevail in the Balkan Peninsula, because he thinks that a preponderance of Russian influence might endanger the very existence of the Austrian Empire, whose Slav subjects would gravitate towards Russia, and cause the realisation of Panslavistic aspirations. He believes that the Berlin Treaty has given the Ottoman Empire a new lease of life, long enough to allow the European Powers time to reflect and agree upon a pacific solution of the still remaining questions connected with Turkish misgovernment. He will probably, when consulted, incline towards the views and wishes of his ally, Austria, in preference to those of Russia, but he can be powerfully influenced at all times by England and France. Germany, he says, has no direct interest whatever in Eastern affairs, but the very greatest in the general preservation of peace in regard to Eastern affairs.'

Lord Salisbury had held off from any suggestion of a German alliance, because he suspected that the price might prove to be an agreement to preserve Alsace-Lorraine to Germany. The story was current that, disappointed in London, Prince Bismarck had then turned to Paris, and again meeting with disappointment, was now looking once more towards St. Petersburg.[1]

LORD ODO RUSSELL TO LORD GRANVILLE.

BERLIN, *May* 29, 1880.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—You ask me whether I believe a story you have been told, that on the change of Government being imminent at home, Prince Bismarck tried to get France to take the place which he had hoped England would occupy in the alliance with Austria and Germany; that his advances

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, May 5, 1880.

were coolly received, and that he turned to Russia to resuscitate the Triple Alliance? To answer your question thoroughly, I must enter upon a somewhat lengthy explanation. Ever since I have been in Berlin, Prince Bismarck has shown an earnest desire for an alliance with England, but his attempts to establish cordial and intimate relations with her Majesty's Government, and his repeated offers of co-operation, were never met in a corresponding spirit. Personally I regretted it, because I believed that we might have derived real and lasting advantages from an intimate understanding with Germany. Be that as it may, the difficulty I had all along to contend with in keeping up friendly relations with the new Empire, was the distrust of Bismarck which prevailed at home, and the great disappointment felt here by Bismarck that all his attempts and devices to secure the alliance of England led to no practical result. He could not understand why England should not be on terms as intimate and cordial with Germany as with France. He made a last attempt at realising his wishes, when he thought that Indian difficulties might lead us into a serious conflict with Russia. He took the initiative, concluded the Austro-German alliance and isolated Russia. We "*rejoiced at the good tidings*!"[1] Bismarck then gave up all hope of securing the alliance of England and turned to France. He told the French Government that he considered the Anglo-French alliance as the basis of peace in Europe, and the Austro-German alliance as the completion of the "Peace League" he wished to establish for the safety of Germany; and that since he had observed that England was more inclined to subordinate her foreign policy to her alliance with France than to co-operate with Germany and Austria for the maintenance of peace, he would endeavour to make friends first of all with France, being quite certain thereby to get the support of England into the bargain. That is the origin of the story you heard about German advances to France. But instead of receiving Bismarck's advances coolly, as you were told, the French Government have, on the contrary, ever since cultivated the most intimate relations with Germany, and consult Bismarck confidentially on every question of foreign policy before moving a step.

[1] The allusion is to the following passage in a speech made by Lord Salisbury in October 1879: 'I believe that in the strength and independence of Austria lie the best hopes of European stability and peace. What has happened within the last few weeks justifies us in hoping that Austria, if attacked, would not be alone. The newspapers say—I know not whether they say rightly—that a defensive alliance has been established between Germany and Austria. I will not pronounce any opinion as to the accuracy of that information; but I will only say this to you and all who value the peace of Europe and the independence of nations, I may say without profanity, that it is "good tidings of great joy."'

'Russia felt the blow keenly, but Bismarck made no attempt to resuscitate the Triple Alliance—he waited for Russia to reflect on her isolation and come round to Germany. Since the change of Government at home, however, he has lent a more favourable ear to Russian advances and promises of submission to German wishes; and if Russia will guarantee a lasting peace to Germany, I have no doubt Bismarck will be willing to resuscitate the Triple Alliance, but only on his own conditions.

'Bismarck's persistent preference for England as an ally for Germany is founded on his conviction that England is the Power best able, through her great moral influence, to maintain the peace of Europe; and since he has created the German Empire, he requires peace to consolidate and strengthen his work, and promote Germany's material prosperity.

'His nightmare has been a Russo-French alliance and an invasion of Germany from the north and from the west, which, if it did not break up the German Empire, would certainly ruin Germany for years to come. In truth, Germany has not yet recovered from the effects of the Thirty and the Seven Years' Wars. The danger he apprehended last autumn of a Russo-French alliance, he has since removed by his Austro-German defensive alliance, by the confidential relations he has established with France, and by the present reopening of the Turkish question, which will give Russia occupation in the East again for some time to come, out of Germany's way.

'Besides which, when Eastern affairs are again engaging the attention of Europe, Russia will let bygones be bygones, and will seek to re-establish the Triple Alliance, and wipe out, if possible, the humiliation she feels so deeply of having been compelled to relinquish Constantinople at the bidding of Europe. She will try to square Austria and Germany—for that contingency we should be prepared.

'Bismarck, who has long since given up the Turks, has little faith at present in the success of Mr. Goschen's mission, and he asks what the Powers more immediately interested in the ultimate fate of Turkey will do when they have once more ascertained that the Porte is impotent to carry out their advice?[1] 'Sincerely yours,

'ODO RUSSELL.'

It was so far fortunate that Prince Bismarck and Mr. Gladstone, though mutually suspicious, at least agreed in this, that in the strict maintenance of the concert and in joint

[1] The conversations between Prince Bismarck and Lord Dufferin may be compared with the above letters. *Life of Lord Dufferin*, by Sir Alfred Lyall, i. 303–306.

diplomatic action at Constantinople lay for the present the salvation of Europe. The aged Emperor, over whom Prince Bismarck's influence was supreme, was, if possible even more decided in this opinion, and Prince Hohenlohe went so far as to say that Turkey in Europe would eventually have to be administered by a conference of ambassadors.[1] But though intent on Eastern affairs and their peaceful solution, Germany, Prince Bismarck insisted again and again, had no direct interest in them. To settle the Turkish question, 'he would not sacrifice the life of a Pomeranian soldier or the value of a pfennig.'[2] He believed that the Berlin Treaty had given a new lease of life to the Ottoman Empire, sufficient at least to afford the Powers ample time to reflect and agree upon a pacific solution of the questions still remaining to be settled under the Berlin Treaty. He made no secret that he would incline towards the views and wishes of his ally, Austria, in preference to those of Russia ; but this, as everything else, he constantly repeated, was subject to the imperious necessity of the maintenance of the peace which with difficulty had been secured by the instrument signed at Berlin in 1878.[3] 'Lasting peace,' he admitted, 'there could be none in Europe, so long as the Oriental question remained unsettled as a whole.' In his opinion the final solution would be the occupation of Constantinople by the Russians. 'Europe, nevertheless,' the Ambassador said he was certain, could for the present 'reckon on Prince Bismarck's support to keep the Russians out of Constantinople, but once they were in possession he would accept the situation and help them to square Austria.'[4]

At Berlin the talk in military circles was of the 'inevitableness' of war with Russia. Such talk the Ambassador thought 'foolish,' as there was certainly no reason 'to apprehend surprises on the part of Russia, then entirely bent on regaining the lost good-will of her Western neighbour;' and

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, September 4, 1880.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, June 19, 1880.

[3] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 8, 1880. Compare vol. ii. ch. xxx. of Prince Bismarck's *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*.

[4] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, July 10, 1880.

the first condition of this Russia well knew to be a close adherence to the maintenance of the concert of Europe and the faithful execution of the Treaty of Berlin.[1]

The peaceful policy of Prince Bismarck was based primarily on national interests at home. The affairs of Germany were passing through a grave crisis, both political and commercial, which above all things required domestic quiet, and a free hand to be left to the Chancellor and his principal colleagues, still engaged upon the organisation and development of the institutions of the recently created Empire, and on proposals to remodel the commercial tariff on the basis of the protection of home industries. But if the necessities of the Chancellor at home indicated this course as essential, the personal pride of Prince Bismarck as Foreign Minister pointed in the same direction. Was he not the responsible author of the Treaty of Berlin? In the negotiations which led to it, had he not played the leading part? Was he not to continue to be 'the principal actor'? The answer to all these questions was evidently in the affirmative. There was an element in Prince Bismarck's character, the Ambassador again and again warned Lord Granville, which resented even the appearance of 'being passed over,' which never forgave those who acted, or even appeared to act, without consulting him, and made him almost as certain to be their enemy as he had been of any diplomatist like Count Arnim, who ventured to have even the shadow of an opinion of his own.[2] 'A pleasant truth, a well-deserved compliment publicly uttered by an English statesman,' the Ambassador wrote on the occasion of a speech made at Hanley by Lord Granville, 'has a magic effect' on the great but easily wounded Minister of 'the most sensitive nation in the world;' and it was certain that Prince Bismarck, having rendered France and Austria subservient to his policy, would desire to be on intimate terms with the British Government, and to be consulted so as to share the laurels which a successful carrying

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 19, 1881.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, July 3, 17, 1880.

out of the Treaty must bring to the Powers. From this point of view, he told Lord Granville that an error had been made when Mr. Goschen, on his way to Constantinople, had not passed through Berlin and worshipped at the shrine of the genius of the place.[1]

Prince Bismarck at this time constantly complained of the slowness and want of firm direction in the policy of his ally, Austria-Hungary, and more particularly of the immense time which Baron Haymerlé seemed to require in order to take in a new idea at first sight. 'If from the beginning Austria had favoured the Bulgarian movement instead of opposing it,' her influence in the Balkan Peninsula would, he said, have been far stronger.[2] In 1880, however, the claims of Montenegro and Greece, not those of Bulgaria, were the question of the moment. A definite cession of territory to Montenegro had been decreed by the Treaty of Berlin, and a Conference had been summoned at Berlin to try to find a solution of the vexed question of the improved boundary which the Congress had substantially promised the Hellenic Kingdom, as the reward of her abstention from an attack on Turkey during the war. France, through M. Waddington, at Berlin in 1878, had taken the lead on this question, and, at the suggestion of Lord Granville, the lead at the Conference was accordingly given to her. But the boundary adopted on her proposal at the Conference was soon after 'massacred,' as a witty diplomatist observed, in a 'Barthélemy de St. Hilaire,' for such was the name of the venerable statesman—the former confidant and private secretary of M. Thiers—who in September 1880 became Foreign Minister in France. Anxious to neutralise the ill-will of the Porte in regard to the aggressive designs of France on Tunis he at once proceeded to throw over the Greek policy of his predecessor, M. de Freycinet, and allowed the French Ambassador at Constantinople, M. Tissot, to join Count Corti, the Italian Ambassador, in advocating a line more favourable to the Porte than any of the various alternatives hitherto

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, December 4, 1880.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, February 19, 1881.

proposed. The Chancellor said he was sorry for the Greeks, who had 'at first been encouraged, then abandoned by the French,' and were destined, in his opinion, to be ultimately betrayed by the Russians also. The latter at the Berlin Conference had pretended to champion the most extreme Greek demand against the even line of frontier proposed by France, but 'Russia in the long run,' Prince Bismarck said, 'would always support the Bulgarians against the Greeks.'[1] Nor was the Greek frontier the only question on which the venerable survivor of the days of Louis Philippe, in defiance of the traditions of the older French diplomacy, proved himself a friend of the Porte. An armed naval intervention on the coast of the Adriatic had been agreed upon, in order to induce the Porte to carry out the proposals of the Powers in regard to the Montenegrin frontier; but after agreeing to the demonstration, he refused to allow a shot to be fired by any French ship, although the French Ambassador at Constantinople had been a party to the proposals which it was sought to impose on the Porte.

The long story of the efforts of the Sultan to evade the fulfilment of the decrees of Berlin in regard to the frontiers of Montenegro and Greece is only not wearisome except in so far as it forms a striking chapter, even in the history of Oriental diplomacy, of the methods by which delay and evasion can be elevated into a fine art. In June several members of the Cabinet expressed the opinion that the seizure of an important Turkish port, such as Smyrna or Salonica, and the sequestration of the customs, would be necessary before the Porte could be induced to carry out the decrees of European diplomacy.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June* 29, 1880.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I shall be very glad to talk over Smyrna with you, but I do not see my way to taking action on the subject at present. We are co-operating with Austria and Italy in the matter, making the same representations. If Austria will not go as far as we wish in general pressure, she will show the same

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, June 19, 1880.

reluctance in pressing, with us and Italy, a separate object. Our principal object ought to be, to maintain the general concert of Europe. France will not like to lag much behind us, and Italy will probably be ready to join us. Austria promises not to give any hint of her unwillingness to move, as does Germany. The former Power will not like being left in the cold, if we are obliged to move. Russia as yet seems disposed to move with us.

'But if I am wrong, and the concert breaks up, then I presume we shall not consent to act as a policeman to enforce general European objects, and we might then properly say, we will attend with all due firmness to our own special interests. 'Yours, G.

'I have asked Childers and Northbrook with technical advisers to come here to-morrow (Wednesday) at three o'clock, to talk over possible means of coercion. Shall we tell you the result, or could you drop in?

'Or should I bring them on to you? 'G.'

In September the endless delays of the Porte at last determined Mr. Gladstone to propose coercive measures, in order to compel acquiescence in regard to both the frontier questions. It was suggested that the fleet should be sent to Smyrna to seize the port and customs, and thereby to bring the Sultan to his knees. Others urged it should be sent to Salonica, or to a port in Crete.

'Unless [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone] the danger of an attack on Smyrna is greater than I suppose, and what I hear about it from Northbrook, I infinitely prefer it to Salonica, or to Crete. The bank parlour is more attractive to me than waiting outside in the street. We should settle whether the moment we know of the cession of Dulcigno, which I suppose will come, (1) we send the proposed instructions to the fleet, first to the French, or simultaneously to the other Powers, and (2) whether these instructions should contain the suggestion of places of call for orders, and a place of general rendezvous, or only the places of call for orders.' [1]

Lord Odo Russell was for a yet more determined form of action.

'I should indeed like [he wrote to Lord Granville] to be German Chancellor for a day; not to scold but to entreat of you on both knees to leave Smyrna to her figs, and sail instead straight to Stamboul and take the Sultan by the Golden Horn, and put an end

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 16, 1880.

to this very dangerous and humiliating conflict with the Porte, which threatens the peace of Europe and the moral influence of England, if we do not strike at the root of the evil rapidly and successfully Once our fleet is in the Sea of Marmora, all danger of a conflict ceases, and the concert can join us and work out the problems of reform in peace and security.

'The Smyrna demonstration will make no impression on the Porte, and simply leads to a second conflict which will not save us in the end from having to go to the Bosphorus, perhaps under humiliating circumstances.

'I therefore hope that if Austria, Germany, and France decline to go to Smyrna, you will think it a sufficient excuse for proposing the Dardanelles instead, and going there with or without allies. Once we have taken up our position, the Powers will follow one by one, because our presence at Constantinople will be guarantee that the Turkish Empire will be made to last as long, and probably even longer, than it can.

'I feel so strongly on this question that I cannot help writing strongly, because I want *our* policy to be a success and a triumph; and I firmly believe that the key to success is to be found at Constantinople only.'[1]

The situation was now critical in the extreme. Early in October there was a meeting of a few Ministers in London, at which the various alternatives were discussed. The decision was in favour of Smyrna.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD ODO RUSSELL.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 13, 1880.

'MY DEAR ODO,—I should be glad if you would fully talk out the situation with the Chancellor.

'He professes that he and Germany have only a subordinate interest in the Eastern question. This I do not admit, as also I think our interest in it is exaggerated. But it is a position which the Chancellor has a right to assume, and which in any case makes him still more clearsighted as a *quasi* spectator than even he otherwise would be. Although generally reticent, he has during the last months sometimes given me advice of which I have never failed to profit. I do not wish to obtain proposals committing Germany, but I should be really glad to have his views. I cannot, of course, promise to adopt them, but they would undoubtedly have influence upon the future course of the Government.

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 9, 1880.

'The Chancellor has more than once said that the concert must be maintained, and the decisions of the Berlin Congress and Conference carried out.

'How does he think this had best be done?

'If France had always held the same strong language as she did last Saturday, if all the Powers were prepared to be equally in earnest at all times, there would be no great difficulty. On the other hand, England and Russia might—I will not say carry out all the conditions of the Berlin Treaty, but exercise an immense influence on Turkish affairs.

'There is a strong suspicion that Gladstone and I are devoted to Russia, and the dupes of her policy. You know whether this is true as regards myself. It is perfectly untrue about Gladstone. I doubt whether there be any statesman at home or abroad who is more opposed to her having any paramount power at Constantinople.

'The late Government used, as a means of popularity, abuse and nagging at Russia. This is inconvenient for the two countries in Asia, and, as we think, not the best way of meeting her ambitious views in Turkey. We see no weakening of our power to resist what is harmful, by being on friendly speaking terms with her, and we are convinced that a working and real understanding between all the Powers, is the plan best calculated to keep things as we wish them to be, for as long as that is possible. What I wish to know is, how the Chancellor thinks this problem can best be worked.

'We have lately been put forward by all the Powers to take an initiative. With regard to Montenegro and Greece, I followed the Chancellor's advice, and consulted Austria about Montenegro, and France about Greece.

'It is clear that our position might be one which we should not wish to accept if we were told, as we have been, "Owing to certain circumstances there is less jealousy of you than of most of the other States. The Treaty of Berlin is to be carried out—we insist upon it. Let England take the initiative." And then, when we propose the means, these means are objected to, not as to their merits, but because they involve pressure; and instead of counter-propositions being made by the objectors, England is asked to suggest some other plan, under illogical conditions.

'The question is, in what order the remaining questions had best be taken, and what sort of pressure is likely to have effect, with the least chance of pushing us to war. 'G.'

In the opinion of the German Chancellor there was a difference between a naval demonstration in regard to

Montenegro and naval action in favour of Greece. The naval demonstration in the Adriatic had been intended to assist the Sultan in carrying out an article in the Treaty of Berlin, against the resistance of his own Albanian subjects. As such he had justified the measure in the Reichstag. The circumstances on the Greek frontier belonged, however, to a different order of ideas, as there had been no positive stipulation on the subject at Berlin. In neither did he consider that German interests required him to take an active part; but he would not refuse his good-will and support to others. He told Lord Odo Russell that he would 'raise no objection whatever if England, with or without the other Powers, resolved to carry out the Berlin Treaty by coercive measures, nor would he under any circumstances take the part of Turkey. On the contrary, "his prayers and good wishes" for the success of the cause of civilisation would accompany the Powers in their enterprise; but he, as German Chancellor, could not take the grave responsibility upon himself of committing Germany to measures which might involve her in war with Turkey.' He would in fact 'lend his shoulder' to others in order to make the negotiations move on, but he would not move himself, and he considered that the principal responsibility for action lay with those who were great sea Powers in the Mediterranean.[1]

Whether it was some positive information as to German consent which made the Sultan suddenly give way, can only be matter of surmise. Be that as it may, under the influence of one of the abrupt decisions peculiar to his mind, decisions sometimes ending in furious action, sometimes in mere panic and collapse, he suddenly now determined to yield. The intention of the British Government to propose coercion was known to him, and he probably interpreted the ominous silence of the Ambassadors of Germany, Austria, and France as implying acquiescence, perhaps participation. The cession of territory to Montenegro would be the abandonment of what was really a small corner of worthless land. The Sultan now ordered it to be carried out by his own troops,

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 18, 1880.

and quickly. The settlement of the Greek frontier implied the cession of part of a valuable province. He accepted that also in principle, but characteristically still harboured hopes of getting some favourable modification in the details of the boundary.

'We have certainly been in luck [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone]. It is amusing to see the fury of some of the Opposition papers with the settlement. I hear that Dizzy, in answer to the application of some M.P.s for leave to go abroad this winter, begged them not to go, saying that we were on the brink of most serious events, and in all probability should be driven to a dissolution. This I know. . . . The Queen hopes we shall be able to regain the confidence of the Sultan. I have answered that I hope our firmness may recover the confidence, which has been certainly withdrawn since the British plenipotentiaries proposed to give Bosnia and Herzegovina to Austria.'[1]

In October, Dervish Pasha occupied Dulcigno with Turkish troops, clearing out the recalcitrant elements of the Turkish and Albanian population. The final cession to Montenegro took place peaceably on November 25; but the Greek frontier question still remained unsettled in detail, and the discussion dragged wearily on through the months of November and December.

The anxieties of any negotiation in which the Sublime Porte has to be dealt with are graphically described in the following extracts from some letters written at this time by Lord Granville to Lady Granville, who, while the Foreign Secretary and Mr. Gladstone were unexpectedly compelled to remain in London, was called upon to entertain the Duke of Cambridge and a large party at Walmer.

18 Carlton House Terrace, *October* 4, 1880.

'I said "8" to the Duke of Cambridge. He will sleep at Walmer Castle. We have not yet got the Turkish answer. Heaven grant it may be favourable, for I hear that the Austrians have implored Germany and France to accept it whatever it may be.

'The Ministers have all dispersed, leaving Gladstone and me full discretion.'

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 13, 15, 1880.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 4, 1880.

'It is dreadful being kept on in this way, and, excepting to dine and sleep at Walmer to-morrow, I shall not be able to leave London till Gladstone goes.

'We are in a most critical moment. If the Powers refuse our proposal to seize Smyrna and her custom house as a material guarantee, I do not know what our next step can be. It all depends on Austria.

'Gladstone is not very well.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 6, 1880.

'How nice of you to telegraph, because I am sure you would have preferred having the master of the house to share your responsibilities. I gave it up, not because of the two journeys but because I found Gladstone, who is staying in town quite alone on my account, put out at the thought of my going away even for a few hours. In fact he is right. We may get the answer from Germany, Austria, and France at any moment. If they agree to our proposal to seize Smyrna with its rich custom house as a material guarantee, we are landed, at all events for the present. If they decline to join, excepting to give us moral support, we shall probably go on, though Russia and Italy are rather shady companions. If they decline altogether, which, however, I do not think likely, we shall be in a fix.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 7, 1880.

'I am getting very cross. Like Queen Charlotte, I say, it ceases to be an amusement.

'The French say they cannot answer because Grévy is in the country. Germany cannot answer because the Emperor is at Baden. Austria because the Emperor is shooting, but Hengelmüller's personal opinion is that Austria will agree.

'Gladstone has let the *Pall Mall* let our Smyrna cat out of the bag. I am very angry: Gladstone is in bed to-day. He would go to dine out yesterday. I remonstrated, but he said it would do him no harm in a shut carriage. I went down to the Office at eleven last night to telegraph, and found Gladstone in the street walking in heavy rain.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 8, 1880.

'No news from Vienna and Paris: Austrian decision will be binding on Germany. The Rothschilds, who are likely to know, say that the French Cabinet meet to-morrow, and will decide against us.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 9, 1880.

'Another disappointment, and we are dreadfully knocked about in politics.

'The Concert of Europe is gone to the d——l.

'Austria, Germany, and France won't join in the Smyrna expedition.

'G. and I are rather differing. He is rather for going on as the mandatories of Europe. I am rather for the logical and defensible course of washing our hands of the whole thing, as Europe won't agree to what we propose, or propose anything in its stead—or, on the other hand, doing what is indefensible, but may be a great success, viz. go to Constantinople at once. We have thought it better to call a Cabinet at all events to share the responsibility, and in the meanwhile amuse ourselves by putting awkward questions to Austria, and blowing up Musurus Bey. It is provoking that the Turk should be master of the situation, and we shall be much chaffed in the papers and Parliament. But excepting not being successful we have made no great mistake—up to this time. . . . Gladstone is all right again.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 10, 1880.

'I am afraid I must have given you a share of my dumps by my letter of yesterday. It must be owned that Gladstone and I were very low. Present failure, extreme difficulties in every alternative, and only chance of real success resting upon rather a gambling *coup*.

'All the time I kept looking with anxiety every time the door opened, for the possible chance of a yielding telegram from the Porte, but I would not hint at my hope, lest I should be taken for a sanguine idiot.

'This morning the wished-for message arrived from Goschen that the Prime Minister and the Sultan had agreed, not only to retire from, but to cede, Dulcigno at once, but that the decision requires confirmation at a Council to be held to-morrow. This gives time for a terrible slip between the cup and the lip, but I could not resist firing off a telegram to you with a mysterious allusion to "a silver lining" which I feel sure your intelligence will apply to the Eastern cloud.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 11, 1880.

'The house of cards has nearly fallen to pieces. Goschen telegraphed at 11 last night, and again this morning at 9.30, to say that nothing had yet come from the Palace. We believe the Turks have heard again of the dissensions among the Powers, and will break their word again. If they do so we are dished, or nearly so; but

perhaps we ought not to think too much of the delay, and things may turn out right after all. The newspapers are announcing the cession, but certainly do not know as much as we do.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 12, 1880.

'We spent a dreary day waiting for a telegram coming from Goschen. Never came, but an unsatisfactory one arrived this morning.

'He says the Turks will send a note, but not that which has been promised.

'Gladstone is dying to go away, but great things come up every minute.

'I have just been with Gladstone, and persuaded him to give up some hasty and rather rash proposals.'

*Telegram*, *October* 13, 1880.

LORD G. TO LADY G.

'Burnished as good as new.'

'Bismarck's *précis* of the European situation,' the Ambassador had observed, 'are generally correct and always instructive. He has a prophetic *coup d'œil*.'[1] Up to this point it had been impossible to secure any expression of opinion from him on the Greek question beyond what could be summed up in the phrase, *Je m'abstiens*, which Prince Hatzfeldt at Constantinople was at this time constantly asserting to be 'the Alpha and Omega' of German diplomacy in the East. At length, in the later part of October, driving 'among the primeval woods of the great forest of Lauenburg,' Prince Bismarck, at an interview which the Ambassador had succeeded in obtaining, 'in obedience to Lord Granville's private instructions to talk out the situation,' threw off his reserve and vouchsafed his opinions very fully to the Ambassador, who was his guest, though he would only discuss the more distant future.[2] After some preliminary abuse of English Blue Books — the Blue Spectre, Count Hatzfeldt once called them [3]—the Prince justified the extreme

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 15, 1880.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, October 18, 1880.
[3] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, November 4, 1882.

freedom of his conversation by claiming to speak as a private individual. Ominous rumours had again for some time past been flying round, to be denied one day but only to be revived the next, of the renewal of the old alliance of Russia, Germany, and Austria. The information which the Ambassador received came frequently from intimate sources; for the Empress Augusta—and Prince Bismarck himself has recorded the fact in very unvarnished language—considered herself justified when she was speaking 'confidentially and maternally' in placing any obstacle she could in the path of the Chancellor by talking at large about his plans; and Prince Bismarck showed evident signs of great personal irritation on these occasions.

'I have given you as concisely as I could [the Ambassador wrote concluding his account of this remarkable interview] the substance of the several conversations I had with Prince Bismarck yesterday between luncheon and bedtime. The impression I have derived from them is that he is rather jealous of her Majesty's Government having been put forward by all the Powers to take the lead in Eastern affairs. His solution of the problem when the Turkish Government collapses would be the peaceful division of influence in the Balkan Peninsula between Austria and Russia, the former to extend to the Ægean, the latter to the Straits, and Germany—that is, himself—to mediate between them. The intervention of England as the leader of a concert of Powers stands in the way of his wishes and of the plans he has made for his neighbours, whom he looks upon as the Sultan's natural heirs. England's interests are in Egypt and Asia, as those of France are in Syria and Tunis; and neither England nor France, he thinks, should busy themselves about the Sultan's European dominions, which do not concern them as they do Germany's neighbours, Austria and Russia.'[1]

The Ambassador concluded his report by expressing the opinion that unless Prince Bismarck could be induced to throw off his present reserve, he would end by promoting the collapse of the concert, in which he saw a possible rival to his own exclusive influence, for he now professed to be indifferent

[1] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, January 26, 1881. Conf. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii. 283–285, as to the interference of the Empress Augusta in State questions.

to the danger of a Greco-Turkish war, which he thought could be localised.

Lord Granville still hoped that Prince Bismarck might be induced to make a proposal, 'owing to the love of being the principal actor;' but while ill-humour reigned at Berlin, the negotiations were bound to drag. This ill-humour was largely due to the fancied neglect of the European primacy of Germany in the previous year. In February 1881 an opportunity occurred of rectifying the mistake.[1] Mr. Goschen had paid a short visit to England, and was returning to his post at Constantinople. At Lord Odo Russell's suggestion he was instructed to make a pilgrimage to Berlin on his way, and invite Germany to take the lead. His great ability and his knowledge of everything German—almost equal to that of Lord Odo Russell himself—profoundly impressed the Chancellor, but the visit itself and the sign thereby given of outward deference to the supremacy of Berlin was the crucial factor. It decided the situation. 'As an ex-Cabinet Minister and Member of Parliament coming straight from you with an accurate knowledge of the intentions of her Majesty's Government,' Lord Odo Russell wrote to Lord Granville, 'Mr. Goschen was able to speak with the authority Prince Bismarck required to induce him to alter his course.'[2]

The most striking of the proposals which Prince Bismarck now suggested was a diminution of the territorial cession to Greece on the Continent, and the cession of the island of Crete by Turkey; and although it was clear that he still meant 'to use Turkey as long as she held together as a useful instrument in his hands,' he was now prepared to give an active sanction to the use of coercive measures to compel obedience on her part.

'Prince Bismarck said he was not opposed to Albanian *autonomy*; indeed, he seemed to think a good deal of the Albanians [Mr. Goschen wrote to Lord Granville], and he apparently quite shared my views as to their future use when the Turkish Empire may break up. He said very significantly that he had tried to persuade the Austrians

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, January 19, 1881.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, February 12 1881.

to make friends with the Albanians, but without success. He appreciated them as the basis of a future settlement. As to Bulgaria, Bismarck disbelieves in a Bulgarian movement, which Russia had no interest to provoke at present, being in want of peace and money. He was very strong on this point.'[1]

The essence of the agreement arrived at by Prince Bismarck, Mr. Goschen, and Lord Odo Russell at Berlin, was that the Ambassadors should draw the frontier line in detail themselves, get an acceptance from Greece, and then insist on an acceptance and the fulfilment of the agreement by the Porte; and now that Prince Bismarck 'had put his shoulder to the wheel,' there was every reason to expect success, notwithstanding the alarm of Baron Haymerlé at so daring a proposal as the cession of Crete.[2]

LORD ODO RUSSELL TO LORD GRANVILLE.

BERLIN, *February* 12, 1881.

'In my last private letter of the 31st ult. I said that we must be prepared for surprises. The first has come in the shape of Bismarck's "new departure." Seized with a sudden interest in a question he would scarcely listen to before, and breaking through his past reserve, he takes the lead overnight, and initiates a proposal which will necessitate the use of a fleet and may involve contingent coercion. My colleagues are surprised and startled, and quite at a loss to explain the change come over the Chancellor.

'If her Majesty's Government can give Prince Bismarck's proposal cordial and sustained support, knowing as I do the tenacity of purpose in his character, I feel convinced that we may look forward to the settlement of the Greek frontier question before the session of Parliament at home is over.

'Hitherto he would not make a proposal or take a leading part, because he did not believe in the European concert as an executive body, and he did not like to associate his name with failure. Although he knew that Austria and Russia would follow his lead, he did not feel so sure of the support of England and France, and he knew that Italy would always adhere to England. But the relative position of the Powers to each other is altered since France has taken upon herself to denounce their Berlin policy, to bully Greece, and to encourage Turkish resistance; and, above all, since

[1] Mr. Goschen to Lord Granville, January 29, 1881.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, January 23, 1881.

England herself has come forward and invited Germany to make a proposal and take the lead. At this juncture, therefore, the visit of Mr. Goschen had the effect I had anticipated of deciding Prince Bismarck to accept your invitation and try his hand at a settlement, because the earnestly and openly proffered support of England, implying that of Italy, added to the already secured support of his allies, Austria and Russia, places elements of success at his disposal he did not think he could reckon on with certainty, while France hampered the action of the Powers by her vacillating policy. Those are, I believe, the motives that have determined his "new departure."'

BERLIN, *February* 19, 1881.

'For ten years have I preached confidence in Bismarck as a means of success in foreign policy, but in vain! I never could overcome the deep-rooted distrust his wish for a cordial understanding with England inspired at home. The coming settlement of the Greek question in concert with Germany will, I trust, remove that feeling of distrust for the future.

'In regard to Haymerlé's hesitations, Bismarck says that he is a statesman who never can take in a new idea at first sight, and adds significantly: "Hitherto I have only explained my proposal to him once." The Powers will doubtless follow Bismarck's lead so long as he proceeds by moral means only; and if the Constantinople *pourparlers* result in a significant agreement between Turkey and Greecc, well and good.

'But that is unlikely, because the Turk won't give in, and the Greek can't give in, so that when the *pourparlers* have served their present purpose, the Powers will have either to enforce their new frontier line resulting from the *pourparlers*, or to let Turkey and Greece fight, and then proceed to localise the war.

'Both these measures will require the employment of ships, and will therefore put the unity of action of the concert to the test.

'Bismarck did not seem to expect that all the Powers would be willing to join in the necessary naval measures, but said that in his opinion the co-operation of all was not necessary to insure success.'

At home at this same time the Government was having to face two important decisions, one on Indian affairs, the other on a vital matter affecting the South African Colonies. After the honour of the British arms had been vindicated, and the recollections of the battle of Maiwand had been wiped out by the victorious march of General Roberts on Kandahar, it had been decided to hand over the place to the Ameer,

Abdur-Rahman, and to evacuate the country. There remained the far more difficult question: was the rebellion in the Transvaal to be crushed or was it not? The twelfth of January was the day on which Mr. Goschen reported the most important of his conversations with the German Chancellor. It was on the same day that the Boers had made their first overture for a peaceful settlement in the shape of a letter from President Krüger to General Colley. Lord Granville was one of the members of the Cabinet who most strongly supported Mr. Gladstone in his wish not to push matters to extremes, notwithstanding the disaster to the British forces at Laingsnek.

'I full well remember [Lord Spencer afterwards wrote] that when I rather hesitated, and with the ordinary English dislike to having been defeated, rather wished to reverse the defeat, he earnestly argued with me and showed me how right was Mr. Gladstone's policy. I know the very turn going up Constitution Hill on horseback when we discussed the proposal, and when he showed his superior judgment to mine.'[1]

But these, it will be said, were the members of a Government where the views of the Peace party had undue influence. What did Prince Bismarck think?

'I don't know [Mr. Goschen wrote] whether you would care to hear that he spoke rather strongly about the Transvaal business in a very friendly way, but giving it as his opinion that we ought to have done anything rather than fight the "white man" in South Africa. He thought it more important for us even to stop the war as soon as we could, rather than to think of our military honour there. I quote this, as Bismarck is generally brutal in subordinating everything to military considerations. He said he had received "petitions" on the subject, but of course had taken no notice whatever. He added he was always on the side of the white man, an indirect allusion to our pro-native proclivities.

'He said another very characteristic thing. He expressed some envy at our opportunities for parliamentary excitement, and his frequent wish that he could take part in our frays. He exclaimed with great go, "Why, you can call a man 'a d——d infernal scoundrel' in Parliament, and I cannot do that in diplomacy." His whole

[1] Lord Spencer to Lady Granville, November 2, 1899.

conversation was very racy, though thoroughly business-like while on Eastern topics.'[1]

From Berlin, Mr. Goschen returned to his post. He at once, Lord Odo Russell wrote, 'took the lead with true British energy and ability into his own hands, instead of leaving it to Hatzfeldt to work out his chief's programme with Prussian prudence and German slowness and circumspection.' The slowness and circumspection of Count Hatzfeldt were probably calculated, and were caused, it was suspected, by irritation at the entire change in the German policy, as to which he had not himself been consulted. He took but little trouble to push the suggestion of the cession of Crete; and Prince Bismarck, annoyed at the small part his own Ambassador was playing, and his apparent failure to get his way, especially in regard to Crete, suddenly showed signs of indifference to his own proposals. 'His excessive sensitiveness,' Lord Odo Russell wrote, 'is incomprehensible in so great a statesman.'[2] There was, however, another and more serious reason. On March 13 the Emperor Alexander of Russia was murdered by the explosion of a bomb, and died the victim of a Nihilist conspiracy. Once more the cry arose in all the Courts of Europe that special legislation was required against aliens, in order to prevent the soil of Great Britain becoming the seat of plots against the lives of foreign sovereigns, and suggestions came that such legislation would not be unwelcome at Berlin.

'Bismarck [Lord Granville at once wrote to Lord Odo Russell] knows enough of this country to be aware that any such proposal is sure to be refused; and the proposal and the refusal can only do harm to the object which he has in view. Pray remind him of the Congress of Vienna and every subsequent act of the English Government in this matter. The instances most present to my mind are the pressure in 1851–2 about aliens, and our being turned out by a coalition of Derby, Dizzy, Gladstone, and Bright, after the Orsini attempt. Bismarck is not ignorant of this feeling,

[1] Mr. Goschen to Lord Granville, February 12, 1881.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 5, 12, 15, 19, April 2; Mr. Goschen to Lord Granville, March 11, 1881.

which is common to other nations. We believe our own laws to be sufficient, and we do not like to alter them at the instigation of foreigners.' [1]

At Constantinople M. Tissot said it was a case of $1\frac{1}{2}$ ambassadors against $4\frac{1}{2}$.

'You might suggest [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Odo Russell] that it will be humiliating if, when Germany and England are working thoroughly together under his advice, we should prove to be impotent.' [2]

Fortunately, notwithstanding his momentary irritation, Prince Bismarck saw that the main factors of the situation pointed to the necessity of a speedy settlement at Constantinople. The new Emperor of Russia was believed to have sympathies favourable to the militant Slavonic party, and the Empress to have strong Philhellenic leanings. Prince Bismarck recognised the danger, and, at the cost of abandoning his Cretan proposal, at last gave the strong push which had so long been asked. On May 7, Mr. Goschen was able to congratulate Lord Granville that success had at last crowned their efforts, and that the Greek frontier question was at an end.

'The settlement [Lord Odo Russell wrote] will be a great triumph for her Majesty's Government, and I most heartily congratulate you on the success of your policy. The cession of a beautiful province like Thessaly by one country to the other, without coercion, bloodshed, or loss of life, and by the sole power of moral persuasion, is a novel and unique achievement, and does the greatest honour to the concerted diplomacy of Europe, inaugurated and led by her Majesty's Government with so much ability, tact, and patience.' [3]

But there had also been 'ability, tact, and patience' at the Embassy at Berlin, and the Peerage now conferred on Lord Odo Russell was recognised as a distinction justly due to a long and distinguished career: a distinction all the more welcome in Liberal circles, because the Ambassador had

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, April 13, 1881.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, March 9, 1881.
[3] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 15, 19, May 2, 7, 1881.

refused the offer of a similar honour for his services at the Berlin Congress.

LORD ODO RUSSELL TO LORD GRANVILLE.

BRITISH EMBASSY, BERLIN, *October* 9, 1880.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Your most welcome letter of the 6th about the Peerage has gratified me more than I can say, and I am most thankful to you for reminding Mr. Gladstone of my life-long ambition for the high honour of a seat in the House of Lords, which, however much wished for and graciously offered on a previous occasion, I could not accept through anyone but through my own leaders, yourself and Mr. Gladstone.

'In reply to your kind query as to the date of the realisation of my wishes, I can only say that I am ready, and always at your disposal, before or after the conclusion of our work, as you think best.

'Please tell Mr. Gladstone how deeply and sincerely grateful I am to him for his recollection of me.

'Ever, dear Lord Granville, yours gratefully,

'ODO RUSSELL.'

Lord Odo Russell became Lord Ampthill, though, as Lord Granville pointed out, there were always risks in a change of name.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD AMPTHILL.

*March* 2, 1881.

'MY DEAR AMPTHILL,—It is not without a pang that I give up the old name. I remember Clarendon showing me a letter which I had brought him from a Russian, who had known him as George Villiers, attached to the Embassy at St. Petersburg.

'It began: "*My dear Williams*,—I know you have changed your name; but to me you will always remain the same dear 'Williams' of my youth." 'G.'

There was a lull in foreign affairs at the end of 1881.

'You say truly that lulls [Lord Ampthill wrote to Lord Granville] are, as a rule, alarming, because they generally precede *l'imprévu* in politics; but the present one is, I think, likely to last, since it is clearly due to the reassuring effects of your foreign policy. You have carried out and are carrying out the Berlin Treaty, which the Powers accepted in 1878 as the basis of peace, order, and concerted

action in Europe. And the natural result is general confidence and faith in the Berlin agreement practically and powerfully supported by her Majesty's Government as regards foreign affairs, and welcome leisure to attend to home affairs by the Powers thus tranquillised and rendered confident in the duration of peace. . . . With Bismarck we are on excellent terms, and can at any moment be on the very best if required, for he has always earnestly wished for the good of Germany to establish a practical alliance with England like that which existed between France and England during the late Empire, but was never able to inspire the requisite confidence at home to achieve it.'[1]

'Foreign diplomatists were misled,' Lord Granville wrote at this time to Lord Ampthill, 'by London society into believing that we Liberals attach too much importance to the dictates of philanthropic public opinion; and that the encouragement thereby given to the peoples weakens the authority of established Governments and destroys the legitimate authority of the Crown.'[2] Lord Ampthill agreed that such no doubt was a common error among foreigners generally, and one which he was incessantly endeavouring to dispel; because it was one of the principal causes of English unpopularity on the Continent in official circles. The idol Prince Bismarck worshipped was, he admitted, 'authority,' though the necessities of his situation might compel him to depend on parliamentary methods in order to get his way from time to time.

'He disapproves of Parliamentary Government, Liberal principles, and free trade for Germany, and deplores their effects on England; and he had far greater confidence in and sympathy for Lord Beaconsfield's policy than he has for the policy of the Liberal party; but that will not prevent his acting cordially with her Majesty's Government for the promotion of peace in Europe, when invited to do so.'[3]

That France should occupy Tunis, and England take Egypt, would, in Prince Bismarck's opinion, conduce to peace;

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, November 19, 1881.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, October 28, 1881.

[3] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, October 24, November 19, December 31, 1881.

and in the same month in which this letter was written, the decisive step was taken which announced to the world that Tunis had practically become a French possession, although the Sovereignty of the Bey was to be in name retained.

Ever since 1878 it had been suspected—though no official announcement had been made—that assurances had been given by Lord Salisbury at the time of the Congress of Berlin, that the British Government would make no objection to the acquisition or at least the control of Tunis by France. There had also, it was believed in some quarters, been conversations between Prince Bismarck and Count Corti, who at the time was Foreign Minister of Italy as well as Plenipotentiary at the Congress, as to Tripoli. Prince Bismarck wished the French Foreign Office to take advantage of what passed at Berlin, and he had no intention of objecting if Great Britain followed suit by occupying Egypt. Lord Granville, seeing before him the possible opening of a chapter of immense territorial changes, at first wished to resist the French designs on Tunis. There was one difficulty, however, in the way of objecting. It lay in the recent occupation of Cyprus by Great Britain. 'The ground,' he wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'would be entirely taken from under our feet, if the original design of the late Cabinet had been adopted, which was to seize Cyprus.' It made a difference, however, that Turkey had agreed to transfer it. 'I own,' he admitted, 'to jealousy of France getting an overwhelming preponderance in the Mediterranean.'[1] For similar reasons Lord Granville desired to oppose any further acquisitions by Italy near Assab Bay in the Red Sea, believing that such acquisitions must entail the early and immediate destruction of the balance of power in those waters.

'I am uneasy about Tunis [he wrote in another letter to Mr. Gladstone]. I see that during the reigns of Louis Philippe and of Napoleon III. the French were constantly biting at Tunis, and as often stopped by the decided language of successive Foreign Secretaries. I do not like barking without biting. But if the result of our not barking at all is that the French make the magnificent har-

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 23, 1881.

bour described in Hertslet's memorandum and in Admiral's Spratt's letter impregnable to ships of war, and neutralising Malta, we shall look rather foolish.[1] The risk of a war with France about Tunis is appalling. But they would have to think twice before they took steps which might bring upon them England and Italy and the Arabs. A hint need not commit us, while it might have a moderating effect on the French.'[2]

'I am inclined to agree with you [he at the same time wrote to Lord Hartington] as to taking at once a high line on the matter of Assab Bay. But Gladstone does not agree. He says that the sending a naval force is a very serious matter; that it might possibly mean war with Italy, and that we cannot take the first step without consulting the Cabinet.

'I suppose Gladstone will wish me to answer that we do not deny their right to disembark troops at Roheita, but that we do not advise them to take the step at once, as it might provoke complications which may be avoided by further discussions.

'Gladstone is very lukewarm about Assab Bay. He admits the whole thing on the part of the Italians was wrong, and a bit of Imperial Jingoism. But he doubts our right to prevent all nations from getting any portion of the countries which approach one of our roads to India. He believes that Assab Bay could be a source of weakness and not of strength to Italy, that our means of fighting on that coast must be superior to those of others; and he thinks that as long as the engagement with France continues, we ought only to act in concert with her on the question of the integrity of the Egyptian dominions.'[3]

As it was rumoured that France had designs on Tripoli as well as on Tunis, it was determined to state to the French Government distinctly that in view of the unquestioned incorporation of Tripoli in the Turkish Empire, and of its proximity to Egypt, the Government could not regard interference on the part of France in that province in the same manner as they might view it in Tunis.

'That her Majesty's Government should take this view of the question of Tripoli [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Lyons] cannot, they feel assured, be a source of surprise to that of France; since they have on all occasions when the extension of French influence in the

[1] Biserta. [2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 21, 1881.

[3] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, August 31, 1881. The papers relating to Assab Bay will be found in *Egypt*, No. 15, 1882.

direction of Egypt has been under discussion, been perfectly frank in their explanation with the French Government on the subject.' [1]

France did not venture to touch Tripoli, but seized Tunis.

'Prince Bismarck [Lord Ampthill wrote to Lord Granville] is in great spirits since the French have gone into the Tunis trap, which he baited for them at the Congress; and chuckles over the security Germany will enjoy from a diminished army in France with increased occupation in Africa.' [2]

Before the year was over, Tunis had become a French protectorate; and although the change was accompanied by illusory promises not to fortify Biserta, the balance of power in the Mediterranean was destroyed.

'It appears to me [Mr. Gladstone argued] that our position for resisting the French intrigues in Tunis—which are but too palpable—has been frightfully weakened: first, by the acquisition of Cyprus in utter defiance of the Treaty of Paris; secondly, to a degree not yet quite cleared up, by Salisbury's declaration, which, whatever it may have been, I suppose binds us. The first point I think most grave, and in fact the position seems to me not tenable beyond the point of friendly remonstrance in case of need. . . . The possible harbour is a grave fact, but I do not see that it neutralises Malta, more than it is neutralised by Malta. The other side is in other hands; and there is another access by Messina, say thirty to one hundred miles round.' [3]

Italy at once showed her anger by accepting the invitation of the German Chancellor to accede to the Austro-German understanding of 1879, which on May 20, 1882, became the Triple Alliance. If Great Britain could be made to follow suit, and be pushed into Egypt, Prince Bismarck would be triumphant along the whole line. 'Egypt,' he told Dr. Busch, 'is of the utmost importance to England on account of the Suez Canal, the shortest line of communication between the eastern and western halves of the Empire. That is like the spinal cord, which connects the backbone with the brain.' [4]

The peace of Europe, the Ambassador wrote from Berlin,

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, July 15, 1881.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, May 14, 1881.
[3] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, April 22, 1881.
[4] Busch, *Memoirs*, iii. 52.

was not endangered by these events; rather the contrary, he thought. If danger there were to be, it would be more likely to arise from the unsatisfied ambitions of younger men, such as Count Ignatieff; or of M. Gambetta, who, having overthrown one Ministry after another, had at length accepted power as Prime Minister of France, in November 1881. Prince Bismarck's anxiety, he repeated, was to devote himself to the arduous commercial and political questions which were demanding his attention at home, to settle which he required peace abroad. So far at least he resembled Mr. Gladstone, and had common ground with him, for the year 1882 was encumbered in England also with serious domestic questions; above all with that of the reform of parliamentary procedure, which was necessitating an autumn session of Parliament.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *September* 11, 1881.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—I am ashamed of my handwriting. It was not "full of plans," but "full of beans," an "ossy" phrase, ill suited to communications between Cabinet Ministers.

'Although remarkably well, Gladstone was rather desponding about the future. When I expressed a hope that he was working out his plan of a reform of the proceedings of the House of Commons, coupled with one of local government and a redistribution of taxation, he seemed to be somewhat alarmed at Northcote's opposition.

'Yet it seems necessary to get the furnace in order, before attempting to manipulate the pig iron.

'Pray remember, whenever you come south, how much a visit to Walmer would please.

'We are delighted here with the gleams of sunshine you throw upon the Fair Trade rubbish.

'Mongrédien is coming here on Wednesday. I expect some pleasant talk with him on trees and tariffs. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

No record exists of these September conversations between M. Mongrédien and Lord Granville, but it may be surmised that the two free-traders were in good spirits, for just before, on August 12, the views of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd had been brought to the test of discussion in the House of Commons. The President of the Board of Trade, Mr. Chamberlain, who

concluded the debate on behalf of the Government, delivered a speech in which he mercilessly exposed the commercial fallacies variously described as 'Reciprocity' and 'Retaliation;' and he challenged Mr. Farrer Ecroyd and his friends to point out any practical distinction between what was called 'Fair Trade' and what the rest of the world had hitherto consented to call 'Protection.' 'I can conceive it,' he said in an eloquent peroration, 'to be just possible, although it is very improbable, that, under the sting of great suffering, and deceived by misrepresentations, the working classes might be ready to try strange remedies, and might be foolish enough to submit for a time to a proposal to tax the food of the country; but one thing I am certain of, if this course is ever taken, and if the depression were to continue or to recur, it would be the signal for a state of things more dangerous and more disastrous than anything which has been seen since the repeal of the Corn Laws.'[1] The motion of Mr. Farrer Ecroyd, which found only eighty supporters, was defeated by seventy-three votes in a thin House, which declined to treat seriously the ancient fallacies which Mr. Chamberlain once more so effectually trampled under foot.

[1] *Hansard*, cclxiv. 1803.

## CHAPTER VII

### THE DANUBE, THE SUEZ CANAL AND EGYPT

### 1882–1883

In October, Lord Granville said to Lord Dufferin that he admitted 'being of a sanguine nature,'[1] and the situation at the end of 1881 justified him. The only important question arising under the Treaty of Berlin still unsettled was that of the navigation of the Danube, which ever since 1856 had been one of the minor troubles of European diplomacy, and was one of a large group of questions now assuming a new importance. The course of Empire had for three centuries taken its way westward; but from 1856 onwards the world became dimly conscious that a counter-tendency was asserting itself. The obscure regions of inner Asia, and the basin of the Mediterranean and the shores and waters of the Black Sea as leading thither, were again assuming a revived importance in the eyes of European commerce, such as they had hardly known since the days when Venice 'held the gorgeous East in fee.' The construction of the Suez Canal, the piercing of the St. Gothard tunnel, the plans for railway construction in Siberia and in Asiatic and European Turkey, and for cutting the Isthmus of Corinth, projects with which the world has since grown familiar, belong to the same volume of ideas of which the navigation of the Danube at its mouths and at the Iron Gate was another chapter.[2] Chateaubriand early in the century

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, October 15, 1881.

[2] See the observations of M. Gabriel Hanotaux, *La Paix Latine*, p. 11.

had described how on his travels he had seen the mighty river :—

'Le Danube inconstant
Qui, tantôt Catholique et tantôt Protestant,
Sert Rome et Luther de son onde ;
Et qui, comptant après pour rien
Le Romain et le Luthérien,
Finit sa course vagabonde
Par n'être pas même chrétien.' [1]

It was because the mouths of the Danube had fallen under the dominion of the Turk that the question had become serious in the early part of the century. By the Treaty of Adrianople of 1829, Russia had obtained possession of the whole of the islands forming the Delta at the mouths. By the Treaty of 1856 she had had to surrender them. The islands with a part of Bessarabia were then ceded under Turkish suzerainty to Moldavia, and the navigation of the river from Isatschka downwards was placed under the superintendence of a River Commission constituted for the first time upon an international basis. Almost immediately afterwards, however, it was agreed, by a protocol dated January 6, 1857, that this arrangement should in some particulars be modified, and by a treaty made in the same year, the Delta and the islands, as described in a map attached to one of the protocols, were once more placed under the immediate territorial sovereignty of the Porte, which thus re-entered into possession of all the mouths, including those of the northern branch—five in number—known as the Kilia.

The International Commission was directed to execute the works necessary to restore and free from obstruction the long neglected waterways of the river, as well as to supervise the navigation and the police. The sentences of the Commission were to be pronounced in the name of the territorial power, and they were made executory, in regard to English subjects, by an Order in Council under the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, by which all the Consular Courts in the Levant were given the necessary power to enforce them. It had

[1] Chateaubriand, *Mémoires d'Outre-Tombe*, v. 392, ed. 1850 (Bruxelles).

been originally intended that as soon as the works at the mouth of the Danube, which the Commission was directed to carry out, were completed, and the loans contracted with that object had been paid off, the special jurisdiction conferred upon it should cease, and be transferred to a permanent Riverain Commission, which, by another set of clauses, the Treaty of Paris proposed to constitute for the section of the river Danube below the Iron Gates, near Orsova, and above Isatschka.[1]

Further changes came in 1878. The jurisdiction of the International Commission was extended to Galatz. Roumania, which had sprung into existence since the Treaty of Paris, received the Delta and islands, subject, however, to an important limitation; for that portion of the Delta which included the Kilia mouths (with the exception of the most southerly or Stari-Stamboul mouth) was assigned to Russia along with the portion of Bessarabia which had been ceded by her in 1856. Such was the joint effect of Articles XLV. and XLVI. of the Treaty of Berlin. Whether the cession of the Kilia mouths to Russia was deliberately consented to by the British Plenipotentiaries at Berlin will in all likelihood never be known. The cession was probably due to the careless examination of the draft of the clauses, said to have been the work of a Russian diplomatist, which carried out the retrocession of Bessarabia, not by a reference to the terms of the Treaty of 1857, but by a description of the actual territory to be assigned to Russia, which was made to include the Kilia mouths as well as the Bessarabian territory ceded to Moldavia.

The Treaty of Berlin had, however, left the whole of the mouths, including the Kilia, under the superintendence of the

[1] This Commission, instead of being permanent, practically ceased to exist after the refusal by the Powers in 1859 to sanction the Navigation Act which it had drawn up. The peculiarity of the history of this question is that the Riverain Commission, which was intended to be permanent, died stillborn, while the International Commission, which was intended to be temporary, became practically permanent. Article 17 of the Treaty of London contemplated the reconstruction of the Riverain Commission for the upper river, but differences between Austria-Hungary and Roumania have hitherto stood in the way of this.

International River Commission; but as the temporary mandate of the Commission was about to expire in 1882, European confirmation was required if the superintendence was to continue. The effect of the surrender in 1878 of the Kilia mouths to Russia at once made itself felt. Russia claimed that as the European Commission had been devised to meet the condition of affairs due to the mouths of the river having been placed in 1856 and 1857 under the control of Powers either unable like Moldavia, or unwilling like Turkey, to exercise the necessary superintendence, she was now entitled as a Great Power to claim that where both banks were under her sovereignty, the practical superintendence of the waterway should be hers as a Power able to exercise it with effect, and ready when occasion arose to construct the necessary works; she also contended that where the river flowed between Russian and Roumanian territory, the execution of the regulations made for the rest of the river by the European Commission should for similar reasons be applied under the superintendence of the Russian and Roumanian members of the Commission. For such a proposal it was not difficult to find precedents, for it was undoubtedly true that though river regulations since the Treaty of Vienna had been numerous, the international character of the Commission of the Danube was exceptional, and had grown out of the peculiar circumstances of the time. The ultimate consent of Russia to the further extension of the jurisdiction to Ibraila, and to the clauses which renewed the powers of the Commission by 'tacit prolongation' for successive periods of three years, after the expiry of a fixed term ending in 1904, was accordingly made conditional by Russia on the acceptance of her claims by the other Powers in regard to the Kilia. A Conference sat in London in 1883, and the Treaty there signed embodied the compromise. The necessity of yielding to the Russian claims lay entirely in the nature of the articles of the Treaty of Berlin, for it was these articles which gave Russia the winning cards.

It has since been again and again asserted that at this Conference, owing to the negligence of Lord Granville, the

Kilia branch of the Danube was abandoned to Russia, when the surrender as a matter of fact had been made five years before at Berlin by Lord Beaconsfield and Lord Salisbury, and all that was left for the London negotiators of 1883 was to make the best of the bad situation created for them by their predecesssors.[1]

'By Article XLV. of the Treaty of Berlin of July 13, 1878 [Lord Granville wrote in a circular despatch], it was provided that the Principality of Roumania should restore to the Emperor of Russia that portion of the Bessarabian territory which had been detached from Russia by the Treaty of Paris of 1856, bounded on the west by the mid-channel of the Pruth and on the south by the mid-channel of the Kilia branch and the Stary-Stamboul mouth, viz. the most southern of the Kilian mouths. The Russian frontier was thus extended to the south beyond that which had been assigned to Roumania in 1857. The latter had excluded from Roumanian territory any portion of the mouths of the Danube, whereas the whole of the Kilia mouths, with the exception of that of Stary-Stamboul, were now comprised within the Russian frontier.'[2]

Apart from the intrinsic worth of the trade—the greater part of which was British—Lord Granville was conscious of the importance of whatever was done in regard to the control and superintendence of the river for other and larger reasons. Great questions were coming up in regard to the waterways of Africa, when the European precedents were certain to be cited. The Congo and the Zambesi, and the future of the

[1] The principal Kilia mouth has deep water in it, and if the necessary works were executed it would be perfectly possible that ships might pass up and down. It was apprehended in 1882 that the immediate intention of Russia was to execute works, and thereby divert the trade from passing through the Sulina mouth. This, however, has not occurred, and the success of the works carried out by the skill of Sir Charles Hartley and Sir John Stokes in the Sulina renders the desertion of that mouth by the Black Sea trade more and more improbable, even if the Kilia mouth is opened to trade. Real danger to the existence of the Danube International Commission is only likely to arise should Roumania in the course of time claim to be entrusted with the superintendence of the navigation through the other mouths south of the Kilia within her own territory, or should one of the signatory Powers exercise the right at the expiry of one of the statutory terms of denouncing the Treaty, and thereby reopen the whole question.

[2] Lord Granville to her Majesty's Representatives abroad, March 14, 1883. *Danube*, No. 3, 1883.

trade and navigation on them, would require regulation. But above all the international position of the artificial waterway of the Suez Canal was a kindred subject which was certain before long to require settlement. The international position of the Suez Canal could hardly be considered apart from the position of Egypt itself and the Red Sea; and the position of Egypt was only one part of the general question of the Mediterranean policy, of which the policy of France in Tunis and of Italy in Tripoli was another part. Nor would these precedents be without a bearing on the Panama Canal, which from time to time was the subject of mention between the Governments of Great Britain and the United States during this period.[1]

The original Act of Concession, by the Viceroy of Egypt, for the construction and working of the Suez Maritime Canal and its dependencies, from the Mediterranean to the Red Sea, was given at Cairo on November 30, 1854. The Act spoke of the grant to M. de Lesseps of a 'pouvoir exclusif' to form a company for the object in view: viz. 'le percement de l'Isthme de Suez et l'exploitation d'un canal entre les deux mers.' On January 5, 1856, a further Act of Concession, with a *cahier des charges* for the construction and working of the Canal, was given, and on the same day the statutes of the Company were published. Article VI. of the Concession of 1854 provided that 'les tarifs des droits de passage . . . seront toujours égaux pour toutes les nations,' and Article XIV. of the Act of Concession of 1856 contained the following remarkable words:—

'Nous déclarons solennellement, pour nous et nos successeurs, sous la réserve de la ratification de sa Majesté Impériale le Sultan, le Grand Canal Maritime de Suez à Péluse et les Ports en dépendant, *ouverts à toujours*, *comme passages neutres à tout navire de commerce* traversant d'une mer à l'autre, sans aucune distinction, exclusion, ni préférence de personnes ou de nationalités, moyennant le payement des droits et l'exécution des règlements établis par la Com-

[1] The history of the Danube question is fully contained in *The European Concert on the Eastern Question*, by Professor Thomas Erskine Holland, ch. vi. p. 263–272.

pagnie Universelle concessionnaire pour l'usage du dit Canal et dépendances.'[1]

It was certain that, whether all the hopes of the projectors of the Suez Canal were destined to be fulfilled or not, a portion of the commerce of the world would pass through the new channel sufficiently great to make its international position one of the utmost practical importance to all the Governments of Europe; and it was at once perceived that the construction must give rise to problems of great delicacy, not only from the number and the importance of the interests involved, but also from the novelty of many of the circumstances of the case.

The analogy, which immediately suggested itself, was that of a narrow strait or sound between two seas, where the territorial Power had the right of levying or of delegating the right to levy tolls and dues in return for the privilege of passage. If ever there was a case where such a right could with justice be acquiesced in by universal consent, here it was said was that case; for this particular strait would be so narrow as to be clearly within the unquestionable and perfect maritime jurisdiction of the territorial Power. But these ideas suggested others of a contrary nature. If the Suez Canal resembled a narrow strait connecting two seas, and lying wholly within the maritime territorial jurisdiction of one Power, there might nevertheless be a right of innocent passage through such a strait or sound. Again, it might be argued that, as the Canal was an artificial channel, made by a commercial company, and not like a strait or sound the work of nature, there could be no real analogy between the two cases. It was also observed that a new system of dues could not possibly be allowed to spring up without some control; and, even before a spade had been driven into the ground, the Canal became the subject of negotiation and of agreements, or of attempted agreements, between the Great Powers, because, when completed, it was likely to alter the direction of the whole commerce of the world. There was also this peculiarity in the case: the sovereignty of the territorial

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 16, 1876.

Power, Egypt, was not perfect, being divided with that of the Ottoman Empire, in the future of which the Great Powers had long since claimed to have a voice. The risk of the Canal being brought within the circle immediately affected by the complications of European diplomacy was thereby indefinitely increased. The existence of the Canal Company, with all the concessions accorded to it, was a further difficulty. If the right to the free commercial use of navigable rivers had become an accepted doctrine since the Treaty of Vienna, and if that doctrine had been extended in the case of the mouths of the Danube, so as to admit the control not merely of the Riparian Powers, but of all the Powers principally concerned in the trade of that river or likely to be affected politically, might not the right of those Powers to interfere in the control of this Canal be held equally good, if they were willing to agree to the regulations requisite in order to maintain the navigation, and to recognise the vested interests of the Canal Company to the commercial tolls, or to adequate compensation for losing them? For the Canal was situate, like the Danube, within the Ottoman Empire, and the interests in it of the Powers were far greater than their interests in the navigation of the Danube.

In the month of December 1870, during Lord Granville's second tenure of the Foreign Office, some interesting *pour-parlers* with reference to the future of the Canal began. The Khédive in conversation with Colonel Stanton, then her Majesty's Consul-General in Egypt, after alluding to the financial difficulties of the Company, which had become considerable, remarked that the only way to insure the Canal being made really serviceable to general navigation was for an English company to obtain possession of it; adding that England was undoubtedly the country most interested in keeping it open. This expression of opinion was reported home by Colonel Stanton. Soon after, information of a similar kind was received by Lord Granville from other sources. In April 1871, Sir Daniel Lange, who at that time occupied a seat on the management of the Canal, reported a conversation with M. de Lesseps, from which he had gathered

that, notwithstanding the vehement protestations with which the illustrious Frenchman had met the first suggestion of a sale to an English company, he would probably not really be indisposed to negotiate on the subject. The British Foreign Office, however, decided to 'give no opinion on the matter,' which accordingly dropped.[1]

The financial situation of the Company soon after began to improve, and M. de Lesseps is found bringing a practical claim to be the possessor of an 'exclusive concession' in the canalisation of the Isthmus of Suez to the notice of the Khédive, a plan for the formation of a rival British company under the auspices of Sir John Fowler having in the interval been put forward and finding favour in influential quarters.[2]

Events connected with the condition of Egypt itself soon conspired with the other circumstances of the case to make the early settlement of the question more important than ever. The Khédive was continuing his struggle for the enlargement of his rights and jurisdiction at the expense of those of the Porte; and a firman, granted on June 8, 1873, accorded to him the right of negotiating commercial treaties and establishing an army and a navy, except iron-clads. But while so far successful, he was losing as much ground in one direction as he was gaining in another. The Porte made constant attempts, and occasionally with success, to reassert the waning authority of the Sultan in various matters; and in the course of a long controversy relating to the Canal dues, which lasted from 1872 to 1876, it succeeded in obtaining a reference to itself, of which it did not fail afterwards to make use in argument. Such was the condition of affairs when Lord Granville's second tenure of the Foreign Office expired in 1874.

Meanwhile the increase in the number of foreigners, and in the property held by them in Egypt, owing to the construction of the Canal and to the ever-growing necessities of the Khédive, and the influence of the financiers of all

[1] See *Egypt*, No. 2, 1876, Appendix Nos. 1, 13, 15, 16, 20.

[2] See *Egypt*, No. 18, 1883. Colonel Stanton to Lord Granville, September 14, 1872. Sir Henry Elliot to Lord Granville, September 24, 1872.

nationalities who ministered to the wants of the Khédive, grew greater as each year went by, and made itself felt by the introduction of one European after another into the different branches of the civil service, which, in consequence, became known as the Mixed Administrations. Thus it came to pass that, when the practical immunity which the old Consular jurisdictions too often extended to the subjects of their respective nationalities was at length recognised as scandalous and intolerable, a Conference was held at Constantinople; and in consequence International Tribunals, with a jurisdiction in all civil cases between foreigners of different nationalities and between foreigners and natives, were established in 1875. These courts, though nominally issuing process in the name of the territorial Power, and with judges paid by it, were in reality the most marked public recognition which had yet occurred of that *imperium in imperio* which had gradually been establishing itself within the Egyptian State. Not only were the courts manned by foreign judges, but the Egyptian Government itself was made liable to proceedings in them: an arrangement destined before long to have the most momentous consequences. The opposition of the French Government to this reform—an opposition which may be treated as a full set-off to the impolitic conduct of Lord Palmerston in regard to the construction of the Canal—was the cause of much delay and ultimately of the denial of Criminal Jurisdiction to the New Courts—their most necessary attribute under the circumstances of the case.[1] Claims also began to be put forward about this time, that the Internal Sanitary and Quarantine Board, on which the foreign Consuls had been allowed to sit, possessed an international and independent character. The political interest of the foreigner was in fact becoming larger and larger as each year went by. It gradually began to make itself felt as a factor in European diplomacy, and also to excite discontent among a certain section of the Egyptian population which believed itself capable of administering the country without assistance from

[1] *Egypt*, No. 3, 1876; No. 24, 1884.

outside. This discontent found support in the ranks of the Egyptian army, and herein lay the beginning of what afterwards became the National movement headed by Arabi Pasha.

On November 25, 1875, the British Government took the momentous step of purchasing the shares held by the Khédive in the Canal Company, and at one stroke obtained what was really necessary to this country, viz. a preponderant position in regard to the commercial management of the Canal, of which the trade of Great Britain was rapidly becoming the chief customer. The future interest of the situation was now in the question, whether commercial interference would lead to a financial protection, which itself might not be unlikely to blossom into political control.

On May 2, 1876, after the two private missions of Mr. Cave and Mr. Goschen, a decree establishing a 'Caisse de la Dette' appeared, and on November 18 of the following year a decree establishing a European control, which it was hoped would restore the financial situation. Under this arrangement, an English controller, Mr. Rivers Wilson, watched over the receipts of the whole of the State revenues, and a French controller, M. de Blignières, supervised, checked, and audited the accounts and payments of the Treasury and its branches; while by Article XX. it was expressly stipulated that an English Commissioner should be a member of the Commission of the Public Debt, and should not be appointed without the approbation unofficially obtained of the British Government.

In August 1878 the Dual Control was abolished, as well as the short-lived 'European Ministry,' in which Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. Blignières attempted the impossible part of Giaour Ministers in an Oriental country, the ruler of which detested both of them equally. In February 1879, Nubar Pasha, the Prime Minister, was dismissed by a *coup d'état* on the part of Ismail. Following this event came the first definite act of interference by the Government of Great Britain in the internal affairs and government of Egypt.

The British and French Consuls-General were informed that their Governments did not indeed insist on the restoration of Nubar, but demanded certain conditions, the chief of which was that the two European Ministers should possess an absolute veto over all expenditure. The Khédive began by accepting the conditions, but showed his intention of not fulfilling them by the abrupt dismissal, in the month of April immediately following, of both Mr. Rivers Wilson and M. de Blignières. The new Ministers whom he installed signalised their advent to office by the preparation of a counter-project for the settlement of the financial situation to that prepared by the Commission of Inquiry instituted by their predecessors. On May 11 the German Government appeared on the scene, and issued a circular declining to be bound by this project as 'a violation of the international obligations secured by the judicial reform,' and holding the Khédive personally responsible.

This circular, the issue of which was the proclamation of the existence in Egypt of an international *imperium in imperio* secured by the new tribunals, was followed by the downfall of Ismail, the re-establishment of the Control in a modified shape, and the appointment on April 4 of a Commission to examine the financial situation. It presented a report on July 17. The Porte was not slow to take advantage of these events, and while Egypt was in the throes of the crisis, on August 2, 1879, a firman addressed by the Sultan to the new Khédive Tewfik, definitely fixed the relations of the two countries, and succeeded in limiting the right of the Khédive to contract loans without the approbation of the Porte. It also prohibited the Khédive from ceding territory. Thus Egypt lost ground both to Europe and to the Porte. By the assertion of the right of the new tribunals to be superior to the Khédive's own decrees, by the reinstatement of the Joint Control, and the repeated invocation of the technical sovereignty of the Porte, Egypt had become the assignee in bankruptcy of Europe, with Great Britain and France as official trustees, and the Sultan as bailiff of the Court. It was at this time that M. Krämer,

the Austro-Hungarian member of the Commission, put forward a proposal, apparently not without the consent of his own Government, for the establishment of a permanent International Commission of Control sitting at Cairo.[1]

Such was the position of affairs in Egypt and in regard to the Suez Canal—the two questions hung together—at the time when Lord Granville entered on his third tenure of the Foreign Office in 1880.

A good understanding between Great Britain and France in regard to Egypt, though from time to time affected adversely by the uncertainty of the character and policy of the Emperor Napoleon, and afterwards by the prejudices of M. Thiers on commercial questions, had been the main stay of British policy under the Liberal Administrations between 1853 and 1874; nor during the Administration of Lord Beaconsfield had this understanding been substantially impaired, notwithstanding the greater deference which since 1870 had to be paid to Germany. In France, Lord Granville was always *persona grata*. On again becoming Minister for Foreign Affairs he had appointed Sir Charles Dilke, whose acquaintance with France and French statesmen was second only to his own, to be Under Secretary. Everything, therefore, seemed to point to a continuance of the ancient friendship between the two countries, even although the affairs of Egypt were rapidly nearing a crisis not dissimilar to that which, as many of the still living generation could recollect, in 1841 had wellnigh caused the outbreak of war in the days of M. Thiers and Lord Palmerston. Since 1841 the object of French policy had been to maintain a stable equilibrium at Cairo between her own influence and that of Great Britain. The French Government seemed only inclined to insist that under no circumstances should the idea of Turkish intervention be entertained, but as this was only in keeping with the well-known traditions of French diplomacy, opposition to which by Great Britain had disappeared with the disappearance of Lord Palmerston, no question in this respect seemed likely to arise.

[1] *Egypt*, No. 1, 1880; Nos. 32, 164.

'We are more inclined to use the Turks diplomatically than the French are [Lord Granville wrote in the autumn], but we agree with them in thinking that a Turkish army in Egypt would be an evil. . . .[1] The only event which could make Great Britain depart from her attitude of non-intervention would be the existence of anarchy, or some attack on the Canal.'[2]

'As long as the Canal is not fortified,' Mr. Gladstone had written ten years previously, 'I do not see much to fear. It would be a less strong measure to seize it in war, than to go to war about it; and this we ought always to be able to do. But never was there less danger or likelihood of our being overpowered in the Mediterranean.'[3]

The opinions Mr. Gladstone had then expressed he still held. On both sides of the Channel the auspices were therefore favourable to the maintenance of a good understanding with France in regard to Egypt, although the recent seizure of Tunis had modified the situation.

On September 9, 1881, Arabi Pasha and about 5,000 soldiers surrounded the Khédive's palace demanding an increase of pay, and deposed the Ministry. Shortly afterwards special envoys from the Sultan appeared in Egypt, and were received with great ceremony by the Khédive and his new Minister, Cherif Pasha, who proceeded to summon a Chamber of Notables to discuss the situation.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD DUFFERIN.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *October* 15, 1881.

'MY DEAR DUFFERIN,—The Egyptian episode has been very disagreeable. But, being of a sanguine nature, I do not see why there should be more danger of a smash than really existed six months ago.

'We wish to act cordially with France without allowing her any predominance. We wish the Sultan to be convinced, if it were possible, that we much desire to maintain his present position in

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, September 14, 1881.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Lyons, November 7, 1881. Conversation between Mr. Adams and M. Barthélemy de St. Hilaire, September 11, 1881. M. Barthélemy de St. Hilaire to M. Sinkiewicz, French Consul-General at Cairo, October 17, 1881.

[3] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, November 13, 1870.

Turkey, though we will not consent to his interfering more than he has been accustomed to do with the internal administration of Egypt; that we intend no menace by giving the means of safety to our subjects in case of troubles; but that as long as his envoys are there, it is a proof that the normal state of things is not established.

'It is as well that he should know that it does not smooth matters to initiate *coups de main* without consulting with a friendly but interested Power like ourselves, and that we believe the *status quo* can be maintained if Turkey, England, and France do nothing to disturb it.

'Münster denies that the Sultan appealed to Germany. He says he tried to do so, but that the instructions to the Chargé d'Affaires were to be as reserved as possible. 'Yours, G.'

On November 10, 1881, M. Ferry's Ministry fell, and M. Gambetta succeeded him as Prime Minister, combining with that place—as was not unusual—the direction of the Foreign Office. His wish, which he had never concealed, was to place the commercial relations of France and Great Britain on a firm footing by a treaty similar to that negotiated by Mr. Cobden. He further believed that an Anglo-French understanding and joint action, if necessary by material intervention, in Egypt, were alone capable of solving the difficulties which he saw approaching. If the masterful personality on whom this policy depended had remained in power, it might have been successful. But France was going through an era of short-lived Administrations, which recalled the early days of the reign of George III. 'Now, sir,' the author of a once famous squib had written, when the elder Pitt had formed his second Administration, 'if you will take a piece of chalk, and reckon from October 7, 1760, to July 30, 1766, you will find five years nine months and thirty days; which divided by five, the total of Administrations, gives exactly one year and sixty days each, on an average as we say in the City, and one day more if they have the good fortune to come in leap year.'[1] But one year and sixty days would have seemed a portentous period for the duration of the life of a French

[1] Letter by 'Whittington,' generally supposed to have been Edmund Burke, 1766.

Ministry in 1881, and even the Grand Ministère of M. Gambetta proved no more fortunate than the Ministry which under not dissimilar circumstances the elder Pitt had formed in England in the previous century. Both these great statesmen tried to rise above party connection. Each thereby only made powerful and malignant enemies, who united to compass his destruction.

'M. Gambetta,' Lord Lyons had written to Lord Granville very soon after the resignation of M. de Freycinet, had dwelt in conversation 'on the great importance which he attached, with a view to political as well as commercial relations, to establishing a satisfactory treaty with Great Britain,'[1] and on this account was now pushing on a Tariff Bill in the Chambers with all the force at his command.

Events adverse to Free Trade had taken place during the six years between 1874 and 1880. The Protectionist parties had acquired strength in Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Germany, Russia, and Spain. Austria, in this interval, terminated the treaties with Great Britain and France which had given a Liberal character to the commercial policy of the Empire. A new general tariff, based upon Protectionist principles, was in course of final arrangement by the French Legislature. A Protectionist tariff had also been adopted by Germany in 1879, where the influence of Delbruck over Prince Bismarck had for some time past been steadily diminishing, and any form of opposition to Prince Bismarck was denounced as unpatriotic. The prospect in April 1880 was that commercial negotiations could be recommenced by Great Britain with France, and might be entered upon with Spain; but there was apparently no opening for negotiation with other Powers on behalf of British trade or shipping.

Preliminary communications had passed between the French and British Governments in 1880; and in May 1881, Commissioners were appointed to negotiate a new treaty of commerce and navigation. The British representatives, who acted under a Royal Commission, were Sir

[1] Lord Lyons to Lord Granville, March 5, 1880.

Charles W. Dilke, the Right Hon. W. E. Baxter, Sir C. Rivers Wilson, Mr. Charles Kennedy, and Mr. Joseph Crowe. Lord Granville's instructions to them were to aim at (1) the general amelioration of the *status in quo* ; (2) if this result could not be obtained, to effect any special improvements which might be possible ; and (3) generally to observe in the spirit, if not in the letter, of their terms, the engagements of 1860. But it at once became clear that the French object was to convert the existing *ad valorem* duties into specific duties according to weight and measure ; and by this conversion to augment the rates of charge. The British Commissioners, by their representations on general grounds and in regard to certain special branches of trade, and by means of the evidence which they adduced, succeeded in bringing about some modification of the proposed tariff. But it was not at once found possible, notwithstanding the good-will of M. Gambetta, to arrive at an immediate understanding upon the question of duties, and the negotiations hung fire while the Egyptian imbroglio was being discussed.

In regard to Egypt, France, represented by M. Gambetta, is now seen advocating joint material intervention, or at least plainly foreseeing the probability of such intervention becoming necessary.[1] Great Britain, represented by Lord Granville, is seen declining to discuss, much more to be committed to the course which it might be necessary to adopt under hypothetical circumstances, either in order to prevent a crisis, or in order to deal with a crisis should such an event occur as an attack on the Canal, or the dethronement of the Khédive by a military movement. Eventually the two Governments are able to concur in the preparation of a Joint Note, in which the Khédive is solemnly assured of the joint support of the two Powers in the face of the discouraging position in which he finds himself placed.[2] This Note is

[1] M. Gambetta to M. Challemel Lacour, December 15, 1881.

[2] The proposal was made to the British Foreign Office on December 24 ; it was accepted in principle on the 28th. Lord Lyons was able to send beforehand a draft of the French despatch, which was received on January 2, 1882. On the 6th there was a Cabinet, which lasted four hours.

known to history as the Note of January 8. Yet Lord Granville is careful to explain to the French Ambassador that the British Government is not thereby committed to material action. A difference as to the meaning of the Note on this point begins almost immediately after its delivery, and M. Challemel Lacour informs his Government confidentially that on one occasion Lord Granville had gone so far as to say that he never thought that the Joint Note would prove of any practical use.[1]

Another important person now appeared on the scene. Count Herbert Bismarck arrived in London in February, and began to assume a position which made it clear that he was the representative—though not officially accredited—of his father. He was much pleased, and a little astonished, at the cordiality of his reception, both by the official world and in society.[2] He avowed that he had never been made so much of, that he was happier and more interested than ever before in his life, and that Lord and Lady Granville were the most fascinating hosts he had ever met. Lord Granville, on his side, said it 'was impossible for anyone to be more genial and easily pleased.'[3] Lord Derby and Lord Salisbury had both been firmly convinced that German support in questions in which Germany was not herself interested, could only be obtained at a very inconvenient price. But another great obstacle to a better understanding between the two nations had also been, in Lord Granville's opinion, 'the want of knowledge of each other which some politicians display,' and he thought that Count Herbert Bismarck's visit would do much to help to dispel that ignorance.[4] The members of English society vied with each other in affording a hearty welcome to the distinguished son of a famous father, who was regarded at the time as the political as well as the personal

[1] M. Challemel Lacour to M. Gambetta, January 17, 1882. See on these events Roux, *L'Isthme et le Canal de Suez*, ii. 53–55, where the French despatches are quoted *in extenso*, and C. de Freycinet, *La Question d'Egypte*, ch. iii. 205–230.

[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, December 24, 1881; February 25, March 11, 1882.

[3] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, December 21, 1881.

[4] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, March 29, May 3, 24, 1882.

heir of the dynasty. In April he was appointed Chargé d'Affaires during Count Münster's absence.

'To-day is Prince Bismarck's sixty-eighth birthday [Lord Ampthill wrote to Lord Granville on April 1, 1882], and he has gone to spend it at Friedrichsruhe with his family. I wrote to wish him many happy returns, and at the same time "committed an indiscretion," and sent him extracts from your private letter of the 29th ult. about Herbert, which will give him more paternal pleasure than any of the thousand letters, telegrams, poems, flowers, and delicacies with which he will be overwhelmed. . . .[1]

'. . . Prince Bismarck asked me to thank you and Lady Granville for your "immense kindness" to Herbert, and he said he never could be sufficiently grateful for the reception his son had met with in England.'[2]

The Chamber of Notables in Egypt had claimed the right of exercising a control over the Egyptian Budget, thereby raising the question of the rights of the creditors of the Egyptian Government and endangering the Law of Liquidation. M. Gambetta thereupon instructed the French Ambassador to discuss with Lord Granville the eventuality of an armed intervention, but the Ambassador found Lord Granville still very averse to entering on that perilous topic. Lord Granville confessed that every plan of intervention which had yet been proposed, including a Turkish intervention, seemed to be open to some objection. M. Challemel Lacour renewed his objections to a Turkish intervention, and dwelt with great force and eloquence on the joint title of France and Great Britain to have a prerogative voice in Egypt. France, he said, it is not to be forgotten, is an African Power, as much as Great Britain.[3] These, however, were but eloquent generalisations, and the peculiar character of the French Ambassador in London did not tend to advance matters. 'Challemel Lacour,' Lord Granville told Lord Dufferin, 'is pleasant in conversation, but his stomach and nerves are out of order. He seems to have no instructions, and to know

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, April 1, 1882.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, March 25, 1882.
[3] M. Challemel Lacour to M. Gambetta, January 24, 1882.

nothing.'[1] The arguments, such as they were, of the French Ambassador were also further weakened by the increasing probability of the fall of the Government which he represented.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD AMPTHILL.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.,
*January* 18, 1882.

'MY DEAR AMPTHILL,—Münster called on me yesterday, and in his light and airy manner asked me whether I had not said that we should not intervene in Egypt. I answered, "No; what I said was, that M. Gambetta had never proposed, nor we agreed, to use force."

'It is just possible that he may have forwarded this answer to Bismarck, and equally possible that the latter may think it inconsistent with my having told his son that we felt strong objections to all the modes of intervention.

'You are aware that this is true, and that we are not likely to act contrary to this opinion.

'But besides the general principle of not sacrificing one's liberty of action with regard to future contingencies, there is the present reason against doing so, viz. that the notables and the soldiers, if perfectly relieved from fear, would be ready to go far.

'Yours sincerely,
'GRANVILLE.'

In the last days of January, Lord Lyons received a note for communication to M. Gambetta repeating that the British Government had no ambitious views in Egypt for itself, and would object to an exclusive influence being seized by any other Power. Two days afterwards, on February 1, the Ministry of M. Gambetta fell. With him fell also the policy of joint intervention in Egypt, and, what was far more serious, the last chance of the conclusion of a Commercial Treaty based on liberal principles with Great Britain also disappeared. It had to be agreed by the Commissioners of the two countries that the customs tariff for the products of each of the two Powers on importation into the United Kingdom or into France and Algeria should henceforth be 'regulated by the internal legislation of each of the two States,' subject to the enjoyment by both

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, July 7, 1882.

countries of most-favoured-nation treatment, and then they separated.[1]

Immediately after the presentation of the Note of January 8, a difference had arisen, which has already been described, as to the correct interpretation to be placed upon it in regard to the degree and kind of intervention which it contemplated. M. de Freycinet, who succeeded M. Gambetta, and, like M. Gambetta, was his own Foreign Minister, hastened to disclaim the view for which his predecessor had contended, that under certain circumstances the Note contemplated joint material intervention by the two Powers; and he also eagerly accepted a disclaimer made by Lord Lyons on the part of Lord Granville of any desire to support Turkish intervention without at least some mandate.

In consequence of the altered attitude of the French Government, Lord Granville, in a Note addressed to the Powers on February 6, proposed a further exchange of views on the Egyptian situation, and intimated that any material intervention which might take place ought to represent the collective action of Europe, and that the Sultan should play his proper part in it. The European concert was in fact substituted for the idea of an Anglo-French intervention. The French Government accepted the invitation, but without apparently any clear view how far it would be willing to go in reversing the policy of its predecessors, and in consenting to the appearance of the representatives of the Porte, civil or military, on the scene as the agent of the Powers.

Prince Bismarck was prepared to observe good relations between France and Great Britain with no unfriendly eye, as part of a general understanding to maintain peace and isolate Russia; yet he considered that during the brief period of M. Gambetta's power it had assumed too exclusive a character, at least in the mind of the French Prime Minister, and he trusted M. de Freycinet to be more 'European' in his views. He told Lord Ampthill that he wished to renew and to continue the action of the European concert 'so happily established and worked by Lord

[1] Convention of February 28, 1882, Article I.

Granville in other questions.' Yet Lord Ampthill again warned Lord Granville that, 'although the Chancellor liked the compliment of being asked to put his finger in the pie, he would not send the celebrated Pomeranian to Egypt if intervention were called for. But you will find his moral support useful in promoting peaceful solutions in coming difficulties in the future,' especially, Lord Ampthill thought, in checking the desire of Russia and Austria to meddle in Egypt. It was always to be remembered in dealing with Prince Bismarck that his sympathies were in favour of strong action; he 'understood and appreciated the interests of Great Britain in Egypt, and had always done justice to them,' but he regretted that Great Britain had recently thought it necessary to share her interests too exclusively with France; and was convinced that France must in that case quarrel with Great Britain. Such a quarrel might affect all Europe. He called Egypt the 'Schleswig-Holstein' of the two Western Powers, and thought that a joint intervention would be like the action of Austria and Prussia in the Elbe Duchies and other joint interventions, of which the history had ended in war. He believed that France had ambitious views on Egypt. These he proposed to neutralise by giving his moral support to the Sultan's suzerainty over Egypt in the event of a foreign occupation becoming necessary. He had assured the Crown Prince that to resist French ambition and support the Sultan's suzerainty was, under present circumstances, to render England a signal service; that he had suspected the British Government of pursuing 'an absurd policy' under the influence of Gambetta, but that he now looked for better things. Ultimately, he no doubt hoped to see Great Britain controlling Egypt. In trying to come to an exclusive understanding with France, and still more with Russia, Great Britain would, he thought, be forgetting that her interests in the Levant were quite different from the interests of those two Powers. He also had doubts, and strong doubts, of the effectiveness of the European concert as an executive Power. In his opinion some Power must act in that capacity. Turkey obviously

had the right to be given the first opportunity, owing to the treaties and firmans which regulated Egypt. Sometimes he used more menacing language, and expressed his willingness to see Turkey given a free hand to put down the rebellion by her own methods, subject to the right of the Powers to regulate the position subsequently from an international point of view; but even then it was clear that some particular Power would have to be the mandatory of Europe. At one time he spoke of Turkey and at another time of England: the Sultan might be 'the mandatory,' and England eventually become the 'leaseholder' of the Sultan.[1] Dervish Pasha, the 'lion of Batoum,' who had recently put down the insurrection in Albania by methods strongly suggestive of those by which at Sinigaglia, according to Machiavelli, Cæsar Borgia 'extinguished' the rebellion of the princes of the Romagna, was a name much in the mouth of continental diplomacy as that of a general eminently fit to deal with the situation, for he might be trusted to treat leaders of the Egyptian rebellion as he had the Albanian chiefs at Prisrend.[2]

Though by a slightly different road, Lord Granville had arrived at the same conclusion as Prince Bismarck, that material intervention would before long be necessary. The constant variations of French policy were gradually convincing him that, much as he disliked the necessity, a British occupation, if purely diplomatic methods failed, might become necessary to restore order. To Turkish intervention he felt a strong repugnance. It was an evil; and only less objectionable than that of another foreign Power.[3] But the thing which Lord Granville cared for above all things was to prevent an Anglo-French expedition. The situation at this moment might be summed up as follows. A Turkish military intervention *pur et simple* M. de Freycinet would not hear of. Anglo-French intervention was steadfastly frowned upon by

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, January 14, 21, February 4, 18, May 27, 1882.

[2] In June, Dervish Pasha was sent to Egypt by the Sultan. See *Egypt*, No. 11, 1882.

[3] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, June 7, 1882.

Prince Bismarck and disliked by Lord Granville. British intervention was disliked by Mr. Gladstone and Mr. Bright. The French Government did not know its own mind, except negatively. At length, after prolonged discussions, M. de Freycinet ended by accepting the idea of a Turkish occupation under European guarantees and control. Then the discussion raged round the question of guarantees; but M. de Freycinet shrank alternately from the necessity of France having either to take any material action, or to consent to the appearance of the representatives of the Sultan, whether civil or military, in Egypt. His vacillating mind was constantly disturbed by the fear that, while France and England were settling the best course to follow in the event of a crisis, Prince Bismarck would after all step in and take the lead by urging Turkey to occupy Egypt, with the moral support of Germany, Austria, Russia, and possibly of Italy; 'when France and England would have to make *bonne face à mauvais jeu*.'[1] The memory of the blandishments of Prince Bismarck to Napoleon, and of Frederick the Great to Cardinal Fleury, was evoked to justify these apprehensions, and he shrank back appalled at the notion of even hearing his policy possibly likened to that of Mdme. de Pompadour by a public incapable of distinguishing between the House of Hapsburg and the House of Hohenzollern. Prince Bismarck was, however, steadily aiming, not, as the timorous mind of M. de Freycinet imagined, at the introduction of either the Drei-Kaiserbund or the Triple Alliance into Egypt, but at producing a condition of affairs in which eventually Great Britain would have to act alone. Things grew worse and worse at Cairo; and 'if,' Lord Ampthill urged, 'we are compelled to protect our interests ourselves, then Prince Bismarck will side with us, because his sympathies are always on the side of force.'[2]

Early in May, M. de Freycinet suddenly proposed to send a joint Anglo-French fleet of twelve ships, six of each flag,

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, April 22, 1882.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, June 30, 1882.

to Alexandria, and to be ready to invite the Sultan to despatch an armed force thither as the mandatory of Europe, on conditions to be strictly defined. In this last proposal, which was a clear departure from the ancient policy of France,[1] he was influenced by M. de Courcel, French Ambassador at Berlin, who, it would appear, had asserted that the policy there was to support anything to which England and France could agree. The new policy met with a modicum of immediate success; for on May 25, the Khédive having read a warning note delivered to him by Sir E. Malet and M. Sinkiewicz, dismissed Arabi Pasha and his colleagues, who unexpectedly submitted, after a verbal protest. But no sooner had this taken place, than it was discovered that Prince Bismarck was now refusing his support to the proposal to invite the intervention of the Sultan with a European mandate.[2] The French Ambassador was bitterly disappointed, but his disappointment was unnecessary, for the proposal was foredoomed at Berlin to failure. It proved impossible to persuade M. de Freycinet to state the conditions upon which he would consent to the appearance of a Turkish force in Egypt, or even of a Turkish Commissioner armed with full powers—an alternative proposal which Lord Granville had put forward. Hardly also had Arabi Pasha been ejected from power, before he forced himself back on the Khédive. Something evidently had to be done, and M. de Freycinet proposed that a Conference should meet at once to regulate the conditions on which coercion could be applied by the Porte in Egypt. The Powers accepted, and the place of meeting was fixed at Constantinople; but when the Conference met on June 23, it was without previous agreement on the main lines of policy to be pursued beyond a self-denying ordinance as to any separate action; and the deliberations, constantly impeded as they were by the intrigues of the Porte and the doubtful attitude of Germany, quickly became the object of the ridicule

[1] 'Ces deux propositions émanaient de M. Freycinet. Elles constituaient un nouveau démenti à la politique jusqu'alors suivie par la France.'—Roux, ii. 61.

[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, May 20, 1882.

of Europe. An Italian caricature represented the assembled diplomatists under the figure of five crocodiles trying to play the music of *Moses in Egypt* in concert on a grand piano. Meanwhile the Anglo-French fleet was lying off Alexandria.

'The Conference will try all your metal [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Dufferin]. I had a talk with Tissot and Goschen. The latter said you would be without the lever which they had for the Greek frontiers. I was on the point of suggesting that we might threaten to act without the Turk, but I thought this dangerous before the Frenchman. I therefore suggested that your language should be, that this Conference was not deliberating on a matter as to which time was not important, but that it was so urgent, that if the Powers were thwarted, the Conference must be broken up and transferred elsewhere. People here are anxious, and naturally disposed to blame the Government, and it is difficult for us to make out our case without showing up the French to an inconvenient degree. I cannot believe in Arabi resisting the whole of Europe and the Sultan, if you can keep them together. . . .'[1]

'Courcel is very low,' Lord Ampthill wrote to Lord Granville, 'as he had reckoned with certainty on German support at Constantinople. Kalnoky and Giers were offended at not having been previously consulted about our naval demonstration; and Bismarck, who is tortured with neuralgia and unable to leave his bed, was easily persuaded not to forsake his allies, who merely asked for inaction. Their attitude reminds me of our own in 1875, when Lord Derby rejected the Berlin Memorandum, because we had not been previously consulted, and thereby left Russia free to re-conquer Bessarabia, and Austria to occupy Bosnia and Herzegovina, &c. &c.' 'I hope,' the Ambassador concluded, after dotting the i's of this opposite precedent, 'that we may proceed to settle the Egyptian question without them.'[2]

Meanwhile events were moving quickly in Alexandria itself. On June 1, Lord Granville admitted that although, in his opinion, the Suez Canal was not as yet threatened, and telegraphic communication was not interrupted, Arabi

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, June 2, 1882. M. Tissot was now French Ambassador in London. Mr. Goschen had returned from his Embassy, and had been succeeded by Lord Dufferin.

[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, May 20, 1882.

Pasha and the national party were masters of the country, with what consequences could not be foreseen.

The Porte had at first declined to accept a seat in the Conference, and hoping to fish in troubled waters sent Dervish Pasha to Egypt amid the protests of the Powers, who declined to allow him to land. Confusion was at its height, and it was now at least beyond all dispute that facts had proved too strong for the Dual Control and the other arrangements on which it depended and of which it was a part; that anarchy might at any moment cause the interruption of the traffic through the Canal, if not an attack on the Canal itself; and that European diplomacy had so far been unable to cope successfully with the situation.

On June 11 armed rebellion broke out; Alexandria became a prey to riot and pillage; fifty Europeans were killed, and a general flight commenced. Cairo was panic-stricken; Cherif Pasha fell; the weak Ministry of Ragheb Pasha, which succeeded, was powerless to deal with the disorder; and although the French fleet was off Alexandria, it was not clear what it would be permitted to do, while the memories of the previous year connected with the Albanian coast were hardly encouraging, even though M. Barthélemy de St. Hilaire was no longer Minister for Foreign Affairs.

To Lord Spencer, Lord Granville conveyed his anxieties.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD SPENCER.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June* 22, 1882.

'MY DEAR SPENCER,—We have had several Cabinets more or less formal about Egypt.

'Bright, of course, the most peaceable. Chamberlain almost the greatest Jingo. I am ready to go any lengths for reparation, and I set great store about making the Canal safe. But I own to dreadful alarm at occupying Egypt militarily and politically with the French. I think the majority would rather like to do this. Gladstone does not like being in a hurry about the Suez Canal, but rather took us by surprise by proposing himself the big words in case the Turks refuse to send troops.

'It is a nasty business, and we have been much out of luck.

'Yrs. G.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W.,
*June* 26, 1882.

'There is a streak of daylight in Egyptian matters. It is quite on the cards that the Sultan will send troops after all. Hartington has come round to the notion which Gladstone and I have always had, that if the Turks refuse we must say to the Conference that something must be done, and appeal to the Powers as to what these means should be, intimating our readiness to take the full burden. It looks as if the French were about to cotton to Arabi.' 'Yrs. G.'

Material intervention was evidently near, and there was one minister who felt that his convictions on foreign affairs in their broader aspects, and his opinions on an Egyptian expedition in particular, rendered cordial co-operation on his part in such a policy more than difficult. The massive simplicity of Mr. Bright's mind, his clear, if somewhat circumscribed, grasp of affairs, made him comprehend that here was no ordinary division of opinion on a matter of detail, no temporary or passing issue, such as might legitimately be compromised, but a crucial question. He saw facts as they were, and looked them straight in the face. On July 5 a Cabinet was held as to sending British troops to Egypt under certain eventualities. Lord Granville before it met, anticipating apparently a heated discussion, 'implored his colleagues to remember who Mr. Gladstone was,' and not to press him too hard.[1] The decision of the Cabinet was to send troops to Egypt, and Mr. Bright resigned.

'There has been a little more daylight about Egypt, but it is still very anxious,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Spencer a few days after. 'I am very sorry indeed to lose Bright. I have a real regard and liking for him; but,' he added, 'it would have been heroic if he had remained.'[2]

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. BRIGHT.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *July* 13, 1882.

'MY DEAR BRIGHT,—Gladstone has sent me your two touching letters, and a heartbroken one from himself to me.

'As for myself, I can only say that there is no member of the

[1] Sir Charles Dilke's notes.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, July 18, 1882.

Cabinet, not excepting Gladstone, from whom I should be more sorry to be separated than yourself, partly on personal grounds, partly because I believe the loss to the Cabinet, internally as well as externally, would be great. The sting is increased by the fact being connected with the department over which I have been placed.

'Gladstone does not think it fair to ask you for an interview. He believes your kindness would make you reluctant to refuse it, but you would come laden with the apprehension that he would endeavour by impetuosity and tenacity to overbear your decision.

'Would you object to see me? I should not endeavour to argue on the merits of the case, but I should certainly try to convince you to wait a little longer, in order to see whether these proceedings, painful to me and condemned by you, may not lead to a peaceful settlement of the question. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

It was at this critical moment that the French fleet was definitely directed to refrain from taking a part in material action. 'The Sultan and Freycinet,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Dufferin, 'are very much on a level as to the pleasure of dealing with them.'[1] But while the Sultan and the French Prime Minister were still temporising, the situation at Alexandria had become an impossible one; and on July 11 the fortifications were bombarded by the British fleet. 'It is well for a country whose strength is maritime,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Ampthill, 'that naval demonstrations should not be thought to be absolutely without a sting. I am as decided as ever against a dual armed and political intervention of the English and French. One great objection is, that if you differ you must come to a deadlock.'[2] A fire followed the bombardment, and was itself followed by the attack of a plundering mob, which destroyed a large portion of the town. The condition of anarchy, which Lord Granville had originally intimated would alone justify an armed intervention by Great Britain, now existed.

The Suez Canal, in the opinion of the British Government, was also in danger, and Lord Granville proposed to the French Government, apart from any other question, to concert

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, July 7, 1882.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, July 12, 1882.

measures at once in order to protect it; the details to be left to the decision of the Conference. This proposal was accepted by M. de Freycinet. Meanwhile, Count Corti, the Italian Ambassador, anxious by some striking proposal to restore the popularity at home which his supposed failure at the Berlin Congress had unjustly forfeited, seized the opportunity to propose the discussion at the Conference at Constantinople of measures to secure the neutrality of the Canal, which M. de Lesseps was reminding the world had been proclaimed in the firman of 1854;[1] and M. Mancini, the Prime Minister of Italy, was insisting that arrangements for the 'free navigation of the Canal' were a matter of pressing and immediate concern. Lord Dufferin at once protested in the name of the British Government against the discussion of such proposals as inopportune and outside the scope of the deliberations of the Conference. He also made a reserve on the self-denying protocol in regard to the not improbable event of violence being offered to the Canal or its approaches. The turning point was now at hand, as Lord Ampthill had foreseen for some days past.

LORD AMPTHILL TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*July* 15, 1882.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Let me congratulate you most sincerely and heartily on having so tactfully steered out of the inevitable complications of "entangling alliances" into the independent prosecution of a truly British national policy. Everybody I meet seems overjoyed that we are asserting our right to protect our own interests, and have taken the lead of the concert into our own hands. Everybody congratulates me on your policy, with the exception of my French colleague, who is quite broken down with disappointment at Freycinet's weakness, and the absence of national pride in the French Chambers. Münster is probably right in thinking that Bismarck will now be reticent and reserved. Hatzfeldt tells me that Bismarck becomes simply furious at the mere mention of the Egyptian question, and will scarcely even read what is sent to him on the subject. "Let the Powers interested settle it as they please [he writes to Hatzfeldt], but don't ask me *how*; for I neither know nor care. . . ." He was so angry with Count Saurma for

[1] See p. 244 *supra*.

interfering with our Admiral's measures at Alexandria, that he wanted to recall him then and there; but Hatzfeldt interceded, and he was blown up (*un savon soigné*) instead, and told to mind his own business for the future. . . . Although Hatzfeldt does not say so, I can see that he is disappointed at the duplicity and absence of practical sense in the Sultan, on whose professed confidence in Germany he had probably reckoned too much. Bismarck, I think, will support any action we take, but will refrain from advice, however much he may wish England to go ahead and settle the question as you think best for Europe. 'Yours sincerely,

'AMPTHILL.'

Was the Canal really in danger; or, as French writers have suggested, was the danger imaginary and merely a pretext for intervention, and a device to avoid the neutralisation of the Canal? At the date of these events M. de Lesseps had entered into relations with Arabi, and had made a species of compact with him by which the security of the Canal was to be respected. But such a frail guarantee would clearly have been worthless in the face of attacks which Arabi would have been unable to control. Meanwhile the compact was being used by him in order to secure from M. de Lesseps a protest against the use of the Canal by Admiral Seymour for the operations of the British fleet. On July 19 the Ambassadors of France and England at Constantinople proposed that the Conference should designate the Powers to intervene for the protection of the Canal, and that the Powers accepting the mandate—understood to be Great Britain, France, and possibly Italy—should decide on the time and the method of action. The Conference having accepted this proposal, communications between Great Britain and France at once commenced. But a fresh difficulty now arose; for on July 6 the Porte, which had previously refused to accept a seat at the Conference, suddenly decided to take part in the deliberations, and on the 27th, in reply to a memorandum addressed to it by the Ambassadors, also announced the intention of sending a *corps d'armée* to Egypt on its own account, but with no special limitation of action to the protection of the Canal or otherwise.

It was necessary for M. de Freycinet to consult the Chambers before the French Government could say that it would undertake intervention for the protection of the Canal, whether within wider or within narrower limits, and whether as the colleague of Great Britain or of any other Power. On July 19 he asked for a vote of money to put the fleet into an efficient state, but with the explanation that he would not thereby be actually committed to action. A great debate took place. M. Gambetta again urged the advantage to France of joint action with Great Britain. 'I have seen enough,' he exclaimed in an eloquent passage, 'at least to be able to tell you this: never, even at the risk of the greatest sacrifices, break off the alliance with England!' But the patriotic counsels of M. Gambetta were above and beyond the comprehension of the majority of his audience. On the 29th, on a further vote which M. de Freycinet asked, not for an armed intervention in Egypt, but for the cost of a strictly limited plan for the police and protection of the Canal, to which the other Powers were to be asked to consent before it could become operative, the Government were defeated by 417 to 75 votes. M. de Freycinet at once resigned. 'You are a strange people,' Sir Evelyn Baring was reported to have said to M. Reverseaux, the French Consul-General in Egypt, on hearing the news. . . . 'You do not wait for us to ask you for something; you bring it to us yourselves.'[1]

Almost simultaneously the Italian Government signified their refusal to join in the undertaking. They had for a long time past been 'behaving abominably,' in Lord Granville's opinion; as in order to get a petty advantage over the French at Tunis, they were 'selling the whole of Europe to the Turks, telling the Turkish Ambassador at Rome everything, and holding out all sorts of assurances to the Porte at Constantinople.'[2] Their refusal, therefore, to co-operate at this juncture was neither unexpected nor was it exactly unwelcome.

[1] Alfred Rambaud, *Jules Ferry*, ch. xxvi. p. 387.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, July 28, 1882.

LORD GRANVILLE TO SIR AUGUSTUS PAGET.

*July* 28, 1882.

'I have just received from Menabrea the refusal, which delights me. We have done the right thing; we have shown our readiness to admit others; and we have not the inconvenience of a partner.

'I am sure that Crispi, who is here, is frantic; that he told Menabrea that the refusal was wrong; that he wrote to his newspaper, and made Menabrea telegraph in cipher a message from Crispi to Mancini in that sense.

'I believe it is generally agreed that the debates have been favourable to the Government. If Arabi caves in, as appears probable, we shall be on velvet. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

*August* 11, 1882.

'I am afraid the Italians have been at the bottom of much of the Egyptian mischief; and it appears to me to have been a mistake on their part not to have joined in our action. But I am quite satisfied with having done the civil thing. I cannot doubt that we shall be strong enough for the occasion.

'Crispi sent me a message from Paris that if I would ask the Italians to join us, they would be now ready to send 40,000 men. But I have no intention to move further in that direction. It is for them to make the first move. 'Yours sincerely, G.'

Meanwhile the Conference was making no progress on the larger question of the means to be taken to restore order in Egypt. Lord Granville clearly recognised that the diplomatic marches and counter-marches of the Sultan—his refusal to enter the Conference, and his subsequent acceptance of a seat; his unwillingness at one moment to take action, and his willingness at another to do so; his concurrence in the text of a proclamation to be issued on the arrival of the troops, followed by the issue of the proclamation in a shape different from that agreed upon—all had one common object, viz. the increase of the hold of the Porte over Egypt, and the recovery of a little more of the ground lost under previous firmans.[1] These plans for the moment were backed by the French party in Egypt, which dreaded above all things the increase of British influence. 'M. de Lesseps,' Lord Granville once told the

[1] These negotiations can be followed in *Egypt*, Nos. 18, 19, 1882. See also *La Question d'Egypte*, C. de Freycinet, ch. iii.

House of Lords, 'used to relate the story of a gentleman who came to him for shares in a railway in "the island of Sweden;" to whom M. de Lesseps replied: "It is not a railway; it is not an island; it is not Sweden; but it is a Canal; it is an isthmus; and it is Suez." "Never mind," said the enthusiastic gentleman, "it is to spite the English, and it is all the same."'[1] M. de Lesseps was now acting in this spirit himself. 'The old rogue is playing us tricks,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Spencer; 'I trust we shall get the better of him.'[2]

The patience of the British Government was now exhausted. On July 30 the Cabinet agreed to instruct Lord Dufferin that he was to inform the Porte that in face of the growing seriousness of the situation, which no longer brooked delay, Great Britain considered herself invested with the duty of restoring order in Egypt, and maintaining the safety of the Suez Canal.[3] The die was now cast, and the centre of political interest passed from the Foreign Office to the War Office—from Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone to Mr. Childers and Sir Garnet Wolseley.

'We have had few Cabinets [Lord Granville told Lord Spencer]. Hartington, Northbrook, Childers, and I meet every day in the Cabinet room at one o'clock, which has been of great assistance in expediting matters. We are arrived at a critical moment, when diplomacy yields to arms. The attack at Aboukir Bay is a feint. Our people are going at once to the Canal, but this is to be kept secret. Colvin, a very intelligent, cool-headed man, thinks favourably of the whole position, military and financial.'[4]

On August 7 Lord Granville addressed a circular despatch to the Powers stating that, with the approbation of the Khédive, Great Britain would take all necessary measures to safeguard the Canal, and the Sultan was informed that the Turkish *corps d'armée* would not be allowed to land until the Sultan had stated what his real intentions were, and had previously proclaimed Arabi a rebel.

[1] *Hansard*, ccxxvii. 24.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, August 18, 1882.

[3] *Egypt*, No. 18, September 18; No. 19, October 5, 1882.

[4] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, August 18, 1882. Sir Auckland Colvin is alluded to.

On August 11 Mr. Gladstone explained the course of the negotiations to the House of Commons, and the reasons for the decision of the Cabinet. On the 14th the Conference broke up after adopting a pious resolution in regard to the necessity of an international agreement on the position of the Canal. On the night of the 19th Sir Garnet Wolseley landed at Port Said. On September 13 the battle of Tel-el-Kebir was fought.

'Allow me to congratulate you most sincerely and heartily [Lord Ampthill wrote from Berlin] on the great success you have already achieved. You have got the Great Powers well in hand, and Bismarck's full sympathy for the vigorous policy you have adopted, which he appreciates and respects, and will support should differences arise in the future. . . . In regard to Eastern affairs, Bismarck has never concealed his anxious desire to see Austria occupy Bosnia, France occupy Tunis, and England occupy Egypt; and now that those wishes have been realised, his next wish is that the occupation may last, and thereby minimise the ever-recurring danger to Europe of another Oriental crisis and all its consequences. In his opinion *a gradual dismemberment* of the Turkish Empire is the only pacific solution to the Oriental question.' [1]

The military occupation of Egypt made the maintenance of the good understanding with Germany more than ever necessary. Count Herbert Bismarck was still in London. He confirmed to Lord Granville the accuracy of the conviction so often repeated by Lord Ampthill that his father would give Great Britain his full diplomatic support, and that he would also regret an interruption of our friendly relations with France.

'The contrary [the Ambassador wrote] is generally believed, even by serious statesmen who might know better, if they would but consider that the key to Bismarck's policy is to be sought in the true interests of Germany, and that those interests require the maintenance of the Anglo-French alliance, and of intimate relations between England and Germany.' [2]

Count Herbert Bismarck was returning to Berlin enthusiastic about London and English society.

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, September 9, 30, 1882.

[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, January 20, 1883.

'Never was your kindness politically better invested,' Lord Ampthill wrote. 'He heard people marvelling at Bismarck's growing preference for England and steady faith in the foreign policy of her Majesty's Liberal advisers' . . . . 'Your kindness to Herbert softened the fierce fond father, and taught him that Liberals are not so bad as he thought, so much so indeed that he not only gives you his support, but also sends you back his son as First Secretary, whose private reports are sweeter to him than all ministers' despatches.'[1]

Immediately on his arrival in an official capacity in England, Count Herbert Bismarck paid a visit to Lord Granville at Walmer, and discussed with him the proposal which the British Government was about to make to abolish the Dual Control. Prince Bismarck had always doubted the wisdom of that arrangement, because he believed that it contained the seeds of future differences between the Governments of Great Britain and France, which he prophesied must ultimately blossom into a quarrel. 'Bismarck can, I believe, be trusted,' Lord Ampthill wrote, 'and is not likely to reveal your confidential conversations with his son. Hatzfeldt and Busch well know that the Chancellor never forgives an indiscretion, and I am not aware that anyone in the Berlin Diplomatic Body, not even my own secretaries, knows of your communications through Herbert to Varzin.'[2]

Prince Bismarck wrote at this time a letter to a highly-placed personage in which he fully explained his own views in regard to the relations of Germany and Great Britain. A copy of this letter was communicated to Lord Granville.[3]

LETTER OF PRINCE BISMARCK.

'I learn with pleasure that the policy which we have followed since the commencement of English intervention is beginning to be appreciated also in the political circles of England.

'In the absence of any direct German interests in the future settlement of Egyptian affairs, and with the certainty that France and the probability that Russia would, under given circumstances,

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, October 7, 14, 1882, February 3, 1883.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, November 4, 1882.
[3] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, September 12, 1882.

become our opponents, I have advocated with the Emperor the necessity of avoiding—independently of the occasionally astounding policy of succeeding English Cabinets—every conflict with the British nation and public opinion in England which could influence the national feeling of England against us, so long as we are not forced into it by paramount German interests.

'Assuming that the ambition of an English Administration in regard to Egypt were to overstep the limits which, in my opinion, a reasonable British policy ought to respect, we should not feel called upon to quarrel with England, even out of friendship for other Powers. For this reason the voice of Germany in the Conference did not support the anti-English "chessboard moves" of other Governments, and left all opposition to the more directly interested Powers.

'We can only give positive support to English wishes within very narrow limits, unless we are prepared to take up a more hostile position than necessary towards Russia, and to call forth not only in France, but in a great majority of the people of England, the unfounded suspicion that our policy tends to disunite the two great Western Powers and to "manœuvre" them into war with each other, which both fear and dread the cost of.

'I have encountered no difficulties in my endeavours with the Emperor to render our policy friendly to England, but I have had to overcome opposition and contradiction at every single succeeding step at Vienna, partly from Mr. Gladstone's former unfounded menaces against Austria, partly from Austrian Turcophilism, not only political, but also speculative and financial, in regard to contemplated railway enterprises, and partly also from the want of habit at Vienna to consider the future of political questions beyond the current week.

'I am not yet thoroughly well informed in regard to the causes of the violent antagonism of a great part of our German press against England. When it is not merely the innate German tendency always to "find fault" and to "know better," I am inclined to think that it is partly due to the financial sorrows of great financiers connected with the larger newspapers, and partly to the large sums of money expended by the French, and the still larger sums of money expended by the Russians to bribe the German press.

'The greatest difficulty, however, we encounter, in trying to give a practical expression to our sympathies for and our relations with England, is in the absolute impossibility of confidential intercourse in consequence of the indiscretion of English statesmen in their

communications to Parliament, and in the absence of security in alliances for which the Crown is not answerable in England, but only the fleeting Cabinets of the day. It is therefore difficult to initiate a reliable understanding with England otherwise than publicly and in the face of all Europe. Such public negotiations from their initiation, and even without arriving at any definitive result, would be highly detrimental to most of our European relations; but all these difficulties should not be allowed to stand in the way of our cordially entertaining any advances made to us, or to prevent us from cultivating the consolidation of our and Austria's friendship with England.' [1]

The suspicions entertained, nevertheless, by Mr. Gladstone of Prince Bismarck were hard to overcome. Like his predecessors in office he suspected that the price of an alliance might be an agreement to preserve Alsace-Lorraine to Germany, and he was still suspicious of Austrian intentions to the south of the Balkans.

'I am afraid [he wrote to Lord Granville about a year after these events] that none of the three "Northern" Powers are to be trusted in respect to the Balkan Peninsula and the emancipated States. Austria has been ostentatiously taught to turn her eyes eastward by friends and pretended friends in the West, and I fear that Bismarck only waits his opportunity to egg her onwards in that direction, taking compensation in his own neighbourhood. It is, I am convinced, a mad policy for her. She has difficulty enough with the Slavs she has who differ in race only. To take Slavs of another religion will be a yet more hazardous experiment, unless she could become a real Slav Power, and I do not see that this is possible.[2] . . . A shade of difference as to the relative dangers from Austria and Russia in the Balkan Peninsula is of little moment between men who are for the respective populations and against them, and such I believe is our state of mind. In my view the cases of the two are extremely different in almost every point. The Russian *people* have strong sympathies with the Balkan populations. There is no Austrian people of which this can be said, though a fraction has sympathies, and another fraction, the Magyars, antipathies. Russia as a state, again, can work among these populations with far greater force, having

[1] The above letter can be compared with the chapter in Prince Bismarck's own *Memoirs* where he dwells on the want of consistency in the policy of successive British Cabinets. *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, vol. ii. ch. xxix. p. 233.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, September 1, 1883.

a hold upon them by the past and the future such as Austria has not. This may, of course, tempt Russia more strongly in proportion. Again, Russia has no greater motive for disturbing Turkey; while Austria seems to have a notion, probably a very false one, that she can *strengthen* herself by extension eastwards. Unfortunately it has long been her besetting sin to make light of the sympathies of the populations. On the whole, any fear I have of Austria is in the main a fear that Bismarck may think fit to propel her. But for the present I do not believe either Austria or Russia can desire a crisis. I am very glad to see the Austrians disclaim the bad advice given to the Bulgarian Prince.'[1]

'. . . Our difference,' Lord Granville replied, 'which is not large, is this: that you are more afraid of Austria, and I of Russia. I have no doubt of Austria having her ambitious views, and particularly her desires to have a share if there is a partition. But I believe she is at present sincerely desirous of things being quiet, and there is no concentrated national force, as in Russia, pushing her forward.'

The narrative of political events has here for a moment to be interrupted, and to leave the tangled thread of Eastern diplomacy in order to narrate an event which threw a sudden and deep gloom over Lord Granville's private life. Among the most conspicuous men of the day was Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, Bishop of Winchester, better known perhaps by the title he had taken from his earlier See of Oxford: a man of varied gifts and many accomplishments, who more nearly than any occupant of the English Episcopal Bench recalled the type of ecclesiastic, half politician, half theologian, who shone at the Court of France in the days of Louis XIV.; just as Dr. Tait at the time seemed to recall the solemn and majestic figures of the great prelates who, at an earlier period of history, were found combining the offices of Archbishop and Chancellor at the English Court. A certain similarity of gifts and disposition might perhaps have been detected between Lord Granville and the Bishop of Winchester. Each was able to delight an audience by serious argument through which ran the silver thread of a good-humoured wit, enlivened by anecdote and

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, October 7, 1883.

illustration. Each was a master of the art of pleasing, each possessed the *ars celare artem*. If the Bishop might indeed not inaptly have been called the Granville of the Episcopal Bench, it was to be noted that the leader of the House of Lords was once represented by a celebrated caricaturist in an attitude which seemed to recall the well-known nickname by which some of the mental characteristics of the Bishop were supposed to be indicated. But though the two men had so many points in common, nevertheless, unlike so many rival practitioners of similar arts, each enjoyed the company of the other, and they were frequent guests at the same country houses, and were constantly found in each other's company.

On July 19, 1873, the Bishop of Winchester was riding with Lord Granville from Burford Bridge to Holmbury. At a spot on the Surrey hills beyond the bridge, the Bishop's horse stumbled. The rider was thrown, and when Lord Granville hurried to his assistance he stood by a lifeless body. The melancholy event is narrated in a letter which Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Reginald Wilberforce.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. R. G. WILBERFORCE.

WALMER CASTLE, *September* 25, 1882.

'DEAR MR. WILBERFORCE,—It was in Rotten Row that he wished "to put himself in my hands" for our journey to Holmbury at the end of the week. We hardly spoke in the South-Western Railway to Leatherhead. But on getting into a fly which took us to Burford Bridge he became quite cheerful, and talked a great deal. He appeared to know to whom all the houses we passed belonged, and had some characteristic anecdote to tell of the owners. After getting on a hack hunter, called Carrick Beg ("a little rock"), which Bernal Osborne had bought for me some time before in Ireland, his spirits became like those of a boy; galloping very fast up the long hill, apparently careless as to the ground we were riding over, talking almost incessantly on political, religious, and social topics. He dwelt much on the subject of conversion to Catholicism, and on the character and influence of Dr. Manning, whose name I had mentioned, forgetting at the moment that he had been your mother's brother-in-law. He seemed a little anxious on going down the steep decline leading towards Mr. Farrer's house, and asked whether I was sure it was the right way At the bottom of the hill, I asked him whether

he was ever tired by a long ride. "Never on such a horse as this." He then told me, in his pleasantest manner, an amusing story, which indirectly intimated his superior horsemanship over that of a noble and political friend of his and mine. We broke into a gentle canter over a smooth stretch of turf. I was riding on his left, slightly in advance. I heard a thud on the ground, and turning round I saw him lying motionless. From the groom's account, it appeared that the horse, probably a little tired, had put his foot in a gutter of the turf, and stumbled without coming down. Your father must have turned a complete summersault; his feet were in the direction in which we were going, his arms straight by his side—the position was absolutely monumental. I sent the groom for assistance at Mr. Farrer's house. I took off the Bishop's boots, and his neck-kerchief. I remember my sense of despair at not knowing whether there was anything I could do which could be of use. For a long time I could feel no pulse; at last I could feel the beating distinctly. I mentioned this to an intelligent bailiff who came with labourers. He said he could see no sign of life. I was afterwards told by the doctor that it was my own pulsations, and not that of what, alas! was a corpse, which I had felt.

'I shall never forget the expression of sorrow on the faces of Mr. Gladstone and of my brother when I arrived at Holmbury, at the end of this fearful ride.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'[1]

MR. REGINALD WILBERFORCE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

LAVINGTON, PETWORTH, *September* 26, 1882.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—Thank you most sincerely for your kind and most beautiful letter.

'I hope you will not regret having written it when I now ask you to allow me to use it as it is. It will be most interesting, and to me most valuable, and I thank you for having written it.

'I am not a canon, but the humble layman who once, many years ago, had the honour of finding you rather lost, and fed you, and was afterwards charmed by the conversation which fell on my ears as I conducted you up Lavington Hill and put you on your way to Goodwood. It left such an impression on me that, though many years have passed, the charm of that companionship lingers fresh in my memory.

'I am very truly yours,

'REGINALD G. WILBERFORCE.'

[1] *Life of Dr. Samuel Wilberforce, D.D.*, by R. G. Wilberforce, iii. 424, 425.

# CHAPTER VIII

## IRELAND

## 1880–1883

THE Liberal party had been carried into power by a great wave of popular enthusiasm against the Eastern policy of Lord Beaconsfield and the ideas of Imperial policy which had got associated with it both in home and foreign affairs; but the incidents of the election were forgotten as the settlement of Europe made at Berlin came to be gradually carried out and new questions arose to distract attention from foreign affairs. The two sections of the party, which with difficulty had been induced to co-operate in 1880, soon began to drift apart, and did so with all the greater rapidity in proportion as it was found to be more difficult to agree on a constructive policy than it had been to criticise when in Opposition. Ireland and the condition of Ireland once more leapt to the front; and the forecast in the election address of Mr. Disraeli was quickly beginning to justify itself.

The Irish policy of Liberal statesmen had long been based on two sets of ideas, which were in reality inconsistent with each other. At one time the doctrine had been preached that whatever was right for England must be right for Ireland also, and that therefore every English reform ought, in common justice, to be applied to Ireland as nearly as possible in the same measure and in the same shape. At another moment it was declared that as the greater part of the inhabitants of Ireland, ethnologically and historically, were evidently not the same people as the people of England, true wisdom must consist in recognising

this essential fact, and in discovering the wishes of the people in regard to their own laws and institutions. The chief obstacle in the way of the application of the first of the two above theories was that it lacked any large measure of popular good-will in Ireland, though commanding the support of a considerable body of intelligent and moderate opinion in the more educated classes. The Presbyterian farmers of the North; the middle class, whether Catholic or Protestant, in the towns; and the landowners, who had either sought to improve their estates on the English system, or had given a legal recognition to the custom of tenant-right as a system resembling English copyhold customs, were the strength of this party. Lord Dufferin, the Earl of Bessborough, Lord Fitzwilliam, Lord Emly, Lord Monck, and Lord Carlingford, and the two De Veres, Stephen and Aubrey, were the leaders of it. It had long been part of their policy to build up a middle party in Ireland and to seek to identify the Roman Catholic Church with the cause of law and order on the agrarian question. Landowners of the type just mentioned had themselves done much to endow the clergy on their own estates with houses and glebes. Lord Russell, who was himself an Irish landowner, and the Whig peers in the House of Lords in 1869, had contended to the last in favour of the appropriation of a portion of the surplus of the Irish Church to this purpose; but their efforts were useless, as they were met on the one side by the opposition of the Tory and Orange party, and on the other by the resistance of Nonconformist and Radical opinion in England to the endowment of any form of religious belief. It was part of the same policy to re-establish diplomatic relations with the Holy See. Such a proposal, however, had become more difficult since Rome had risen into the capital of the kingdom of Italy, and the claim of the Pope to be any longer regarded as a temporal Sovereign had in consequence become very doubtful.

The attempt to enter into diplomatic relations with Rome had had a chequered history. The memories associated with the Earl of Castlemaine's embassy to Rome in 1687 were still profoundly cherished by every Irish Protestant—the

mission which Bishop Burnet had denounced as 'high treason by law,' and had even made Lord Chancellor Jeffreys 'uneasy.' It had ended in the Earl of Castlemaine being tried on a capital charge 'for going as an Embassador to Rome,' and he was sent to the Tower, although he pleaded that 'he did not go to Rome for any religious purpose, but only to show courtesy to a temporal Prince and for a secular purpose.'[1] From that time nothing more was heard of embassies to Rome till 1848, when it was thought that a more open procedure might be the safest to follow after all. In that year a Bill was introduced in the House of Lords to enable her Majesty to open and carry on diplomatic relations 'with the Court of Rome,' and this Bill ultimately became law, but subject to an alteration which, curiously enough, eventually proved fatal to it. On the motion of the Bishop of Winchester in the House of Lords, the words 'Sovereign of the Roman States' were substituted in the Bill for the words just quoted,[2] and in consequence, when in October 1870 the Bishop of Rome ceased to be 'Sovereign of the Roman States,' the Statute Law Revision Committee considered themselves justified in proposing the repeal of the Act as obsolete, and succeeded in the attempt.[3]

The Act was enabling only, and while it was on the Statute Book, from which it was so soon to disappear, no public appointment was ever made under its terms; but the practice grew up of allowing a Secretary of Legation, nominally appointed to the Grand Ducal Court of Tuscany, to reside at Rome, where he was regarded as *de facto* Minister to the Vatican, but was always prepared to assert that, like the Earl of Castlemaine, he was there 'for secular purposes only;' and even this arrangement came to an end when Mr. Jervoise was withdrawn from Rome by Lord Derby, and no other appointment was made.

In 1879 it began to be recognised that many Roman

[1] Burnet, *History of his own Time*, 703–716; iii. 164 (ed. 1833). *State Trials*, xii. 598.

[2] *Hansard*, xcvi. 873.

[3] Statute Law Revision Act, 1875, 38, 39 Vict. c. 66.

Catholic priests were supporting Mr. Parnell in the land agitation in Ireland, and that language and incitements to violence were being connived at by some whose conduct was the more remarkable when it was considered that they were the priests of a Church which on the continent of Europe was professing with special loudness at this very time to be the chief pillar of order and the sworn enemy of revolution. On this aspect of the question Lord Granville had already written to Lord Emly, a Roman Catholic peer, towards the end of 1879, while still in Opposition.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD EMLY.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *October* 16, 1879.

'MY DEAR EMLY,—The form which Mr. Parnell has lately given to agitation in Ireland must be painful to you for many reasons.

'The alarm which is felt by some as to its being possibly successful, is, I believe, greatly exaggerated. A scheme of socialistic spoliation will not prevail against the powerful minority in Ireland, backed up by the strong feeling of this country and of Scotland.

'The real danger appears to me to be of a different sort, and is one which especially touches you, who are not only a good Irishman, but are so warmly devoted to the best interests of your own religion.

'Mr. Parnell seems to have secured the assistance of some of the Roman Catholic priests. It is with great regret that I have learnt this. I do not know that it ought to excite much surprise. The clergy in non-spiritual things are naturally influenced by the atmosphere in which they live. They sympathise deeply with any feelings very strongly exciting their flocks, and they are fearful of losing their popularity with them.

'Of all the cries that could be invented, none appeals so strongly to the apparent self-interest of the small farmers of Ireland as that of the land. O'Connell, when not engaged in the noble work of Roman Catholic Emancipation, encouraged some schemes of a speculative character, which only indirectly interested the feelings of his followers, and in the substantial character of which he himself probably did not much believe. But the offers made by Mr. Parnell are of a very tangible character, and do not require much eloquence to recommend them to the judgment of those for whom so great, and seemingly so advantageous, a change is proposed. But for the clergy to support schemes subversive of the rights of property,

is, apart from any question of morality, pregnant with great political dangers.

'No one knows better than you the latent hostile feeling which unfortunately still exists against the Irish and against the Roman Catholic religion, though the feeling has been generally diminishing ever since the Roman Catholic Emancipation. The practice and teaching of the greatest and best portion of the Liberal party, and the opinion of some of the moderate Conservatives, have all tended to produce this effect. But do you doubt the possibility of a strong reaction, a reaction going much higher than the uneducated masses, and which may be encouraged by rival political parties, if the judgment, feelings, and prejudices of the English and the Scotch are excited by an agrarian agitation, accompanied by threats of murder and supported by the Roman Catholic priesthood?

'In these circumstances how impossible it would be for any Government, and how difficult for the Liberal leaders, to maintain, much less to strengthen, the Liberal policy towards Ireland and the Roman Catholics which has been, more or less, followed for so many years.

'I feel sure you agree with me; and if so, is it not your duty to explain the real state of things to those who may exercise a useful influence?

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Mr. Gladstone's Government had not been long in office before it became clear that the land agitation was the main factor of the political situation in Ireland. The Act of 1881 was the result; but as the agitation continued notwithstanding the passage of the Act, *pourparlers* were opened up with a view of trying to induce the Pope to compel the clergy in Ireland to abstain from taking any further part in a movement which more and more seemed to be assuming a revolutionary character. The advisers of the Holy See acutely thought that here was an opportunity to compel the British Government to renew if not official at least unofficial relations.

There were at this time several minor questions pending, affecting the political and religious interests of the Roman Catholic subjects of the Queen, such as the sale and enforced conversion of the property of the Propaganda by the Italian Government, and the position of the Anglican Bishop of Gibraltar in the Mediterranean, in all of which the Cardinal

Secretary of State was anxious for the good-will, and if possible the support, of the British Government. But if the property of the Propaganda seemed a vital point to Cardinal Jacobini, 'Ireland,' Lord Granville reminded Sir Augustus Paget, 'is a most anxious subject for us all,' and one, he thought, wherein the influence of the Pope ought to assert itself in the interest of law.[1] The appointments to Bishoprics both in Ireland and in the colonies were, for example, matters in which the good-will of the Pope could make itself felt, and felt effectively, if the Holy Father so chose. Such was the origin of the so-called 'mission' of Mr. Errington, a popular Irish Roman Catholic Member of Parliament to Rome. It was the offspring of the brain of the officials of the Castle of Dublin rather than of Downing Street. On the whole, experience was against it. Hitherto, when Protestant States had entered into relations with the Holy Father, it had always been openly done, and the diplomatist selected had invariably himself been a Protestant. In the long line of illustrious men to whom before 1870 the interests of Prussia at the Vatican had been entrusted, and after 1880 those of the German Empire, it would have been difficult to find the name of a Roman Catholic. Wilhelm von Humboldt, Niebuhr, Bunsen, Buch, Usedom, von Kanitz, Arnim, not to mention others, are a few of the names which will occur to the reader. All these were Protestants, and since 1880, when a mission to the Vatican was re-established after the struggle over the May Laws, the same tradition had been continued in the appointment of Schlügen, Bülow, and Rothenhahn. Further, while the Vatican had received a succession of German Protestant diplomatists, a Papal nuncio had never been received at Berlin, even before 1870. The same conditions held good in the relations of the Court of St. Petersburg with the Vatican. The diplomatist accredited by the Czar to the Vatican was always a member of the Greek Church, but a nuncio had never been received at St. Petersburg. Compared with these precedents, the private mission or visit of Mr. Errington seemed only to suggest an attempt at

[1] Lord Granville to Sir Augustus Paget, December 3, 19, 30, 1880.

backstairs influence and some occult design, which a Protestant State was afraid publicly to avow: a second and belated edition of the proceedings of Lord Castlemaine. It was disliked by Mr. Gladstone and but faintly supported by Lord Granville. 'Mr. Errington, M.P. for Longford, is going to Rome,' Lord Granville informed Sir Augustus Paget, 'and may be able to give you information as to the exact manner in which a favourable treatment might be secured.'[1] Mr. Errington was soon after followed by Lord O'Hagan, Lord Chancellor of Ireland, who, it was understood, would take any opportunity which might arise of making such private and confidential communications on the above subjects as might be desirable. Mr. Errington exposed himself to some criticisms. It was unavoidable that it should be so, especially when he paid a second visit to Rome in the winter of 1881.

'He seems [Mr. Gladstone wrote] to be going rather ahead. He views the case as if the Pope were going to do at our instance something out of the way, and something of very great importance. I confess I do not attach such vast importance to this step, and it does not seem at all out of the way that "he in the metropolitan see of Ireland" should have a title which his predecessor had. We, I apprehend, want nothing but that the clergy, like other people, should support the law. But the Pope ought for his own credit to want this just as much as we do, and not to set it up as something gratuitous on his part, or requiring an equivalent on ours.

'There is in Rome a certain Archbishop *in partibus* named Passevalle, of high character and position. He was Pope's Chaplain, and preached the opening sermon for the Vatican Council. But he would not stand its extravagances, and is in consequence laid aside. His language recently reported to me is of some anxiety lest we should re-establish diplomatic relations with the Pope; and he treats the anxiety on that side as purely aimed at getting some countenance from us for anti-Italian pretensions.'[2]

It would appear that Mr. Errington at one moment went a little beyond what the Government desired in holding out prospects that the desire of the Vatican for more formal relations would be favourably entertained. Nevertheless, the results

[1] Lord Granville to Sir Augustus Paget, December 3, 1880.
[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 6, 1881.

of the communications made through him were considered to have been of value. For hitherto the Vatican had depended for their information on Irish affairs on reports from the Roman Catholic Hierarchy in Ireland, and from the Irish College in Rome, the Principal and some of the members of which were violently Nationalist, indeed almost Fenian, in sentiment.

Mr. Errington was provided with introductions to show that he was entitled to speak with knowledge of the views of the Government. It was not intended, nor did he himself desire, that he should have any representative capacity, and he expressly stipulated that he should receive no remuneration, nor even any contribution to his expenses. His only credential was a private letter addressed to him by Lord Granville, stating that Lord Granville was glad he was going to Rome; that his position in Ireland and in the House of Commons, and the confidence placed in him by Mr. Forster, gave him exceptional advantages for explaining the position of affairs there; that the Pope must be glad that an impartial and competent man in an independent position and trusted as well by the Government as by all who knew him, should place before the Cardinal Secretary facts upon which reliance could be placed; and that Lord Granville had no doubt that Mr. Forster would supply him with any information which he might require in addition to that which he possessed. The correspondence with Mr. Errington was entirely in the nature of private letters, and the Foreign Office had no connection with it beyond forwarding it to Rome in the Despatch bags. Mr. Errington acted in harmony with Lord O'Hagan. He was anxious not to check too bluntly the endeavours of the Vatican to obtain some prospect that a more formal channel of communications would eventually be established. It was in this respect that Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville were afraid at one moment that he might have gone too far in encouraging expectations, but he quickly set this right with much tact. The Government perhaps might have been ready to agree to occasional communications with the Vatican through a Secretary of the Embassy to the

Quirinal. But the Vatican would not listen to this. The least it would probably have accepted was an arrangement for occasional visits by a Secretary of the Embassy at Paris or some other capital. Everything connected with the Quirinal was anathema.

As a Catholic and a resident Irish landlord, Mr. Errington was able to speak with considerable authority and to explain things better and more sympathetically than any purely official representative. In this respect his mission was considered to have been of use in procuring a less prejudiced consideration of Irish affairs and of some other questions in which the goodwill of the Vatican was important. Meanwhile mutterings on the subject began at home, and the 'mission,' as it was termed, was attacked from two opposite quarters: by the extreme Protestant party, who would have liked to treat him and those who had sent him even as the Earl of Castlemaine had been treated; and by the followers of Mr. Parnell, who dreaded a possible breach between their party and the Pope.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER, *December* 19, 1881.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Thanks for your note. I have telegraphed to Paget to represent strongly what you suggest as to the inutility of secret advice instead of open instructions to the clergy.

'Lady Herbert came to me saying she had been referred to me by you. She came on the same story as Mr. Errington had previously done. It is evident that the Pope wishes to use our present necessities as a lever to force us to renew unofficial communications with him. . . . I told her that I had reason to believe that the Pope had authentic information upon which he could act if he had a mind, and that he was also much more likely to be convinced by the representatives of English and Irish Catholic landowners than by any representatives of the British Government. I added that the conduct of the priests exasperated British and Protestant feeling so much that it made any action on the part of the Liberal party favourable to the Roman Catholic religion much more difficult than it ought to be.

'I always thought it a mistake recalling Jervoise, which Derby did; but to appoint a new man is a different matter. . . .

'Yours, G.'

Encouraged by some recent successes in the character of the Parliamentary champion of orthodox religion against agnosticism in the person of Mr. Bradlaugh, Sir Henry Drummond Wolff reappeared on the scene as the defender of the nation against Popery, and the Government were night after night pressed to explain Mr. Errington's position and their own. In burning language and with prophetic wrath Sir Henry attacked the wickedness of a party of Whig latitudinarians like Lord Granville, avowed Papists like Lord Ripon, and disguised Papists like Mr. Gladstone, in having sent Mr. Errington to betray the liberties of England to the Bishop of Rome and even perhaps to bind the hands of their successors. There was a shower of questions in the House of Commons, and the passions of the days of the Popish plot seemed revived by those who saw—as in 1679—a good political asset in rousing up the dormant religious prejudices of the country against the Government of the day. Meanwhile opposition from a different quarter was making itself felt.

'I have received a letter from Errington [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone], complaining that his nose was out of joint in consequence of the attitude Manning was taking, strongly criticising the Pope's Irish policy, which the Cardinal said was alienating the Catholic populations, and advising the Pope to send a letter of thanks to Archbishop Croke.'[1]

Nor was the Cabinet itself altogether agreed as to what was exactly to be aimed at.

'The Chancellor, Carlingford, Childers, Northbrook, and Hartington [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Spencer] all agree with you about diplomatic relations with Rome, but Gladstone is inclined to put his foot down against doing more than allowing some member of the Roman Embassy, who should never be accredited to the King of Italy, to be the medium of communication, or, on the other hand, that the Ambassador should not claim to communicate with the Pope, or the Secretary Cardinal, but should do so with a confidential Papal subordinate. The Cardinal (Howard) does not think the Vatican will consent to either of these plans.'[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 27, 1882.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, August 18, 1882.

In the winter of 1882 Mr. Errington returned to Rome.

SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*Sunday night, February* 12, 1882.

'DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I have tried my hand at a formula which I inclose, but I do not know that it is in any respect an improvement on our previous essays.

'Whatever is said and in whatever form, it will not deprive the enemy of their aim, which is to tar us with the No Popery brush.

'I am sometimes disposed to think that the boldest course might be the best, viz. to avow what everyone knows and must admit to be the fact, that in the present state of Ireland it is of first-rate importance to rally all social and religious influences to the side of order—and amongst these the chiefest influence, that of the Church of Rome, which has been the friend of Revolution—and that for that purpose we were desirous to obtain the good-will and co-operation of the Head of that Church, and communicate in a friendly though unofficial manner with the Pope at Rome just as we might have done with the Irish prelates in Dublin.

'If this were once openly avowed, the sensible Tories, and above all the Irish landlords, would recognise that it was the best thing which could possibly be done in their interests, as from what I know it depends on the good-will of the priest and the bishop whether any rent is paid or not.

'In such a state of things as that which exists in Ireland, I for one should not be afraid to assert that I had had recourse to every instrument which offered a legitimate prospect of sustaining the framework of society. I should point out how mischievous it is by such questions as those now put to seek to inflame religious animosities at a moment when it is of the highest consequence to rally men of all creeds and opinions to the side of order and good government.

'I would add that if the clergy of the Church of Rome and their Head are willing to aid in the difficult task of tranquillising Ireland, it is not the business of any wise Government or any good citizen to repel their co-operation in a spirit of intolerance, but rather to welcome their co-operation in the common cause.

'Yours sincerely,

'W. V. HARCOURT.'

MEMORANDUM ON SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT'S LETTER BY LORD GRANVILLE.

*February* 13, 1882.

'I am inclined to think that Harcourt's last formula is the best that has been drafted.

'In debate, I should not go so far as Harcourt suggests. I should, if Dilke, who knows the feelings of the House so well, thinks it advisable, chaff Wolff at having erected himself as the representative of Christianity in general, and of Protestantism in particular.

'I should use Harcourt's argument that it is not desirable to excite religious strife in addition to the other evils with which we are now contending in Ireland. I should say that exaggerated notions prevail in the mind of Sir H. D. Wolff as to the character of the communications which have been made ; that no negotiations, proposals, or requests have been authorised to be made by Errington to the Vatican ; but her Majesty's Government were glad that information which Mr. Errington had personally collected, or derived from official sources, should be conveyed to the Vatican on subjects of interest to the Roman Catholic subjects of the Empire, and that Mr. Errington and Lord O'Hagan during a shorter stay had supplied such information.

'G.'

Mr. Errington's continued presence at Rome caused a fresh outburst of Protestant indignation, and the parliamentary light-horse of Mr. Parnell were found attacking the mission from one side, while the heavy artillery of Protestantism was battering it on the other. Mr. Errington, it was in vain explained again and again, never had a formal appointment, nor were his communications ever dealt with officially by the Foreign Office. Any communications with the See of Rome seemed to suggest an atmosphere of mystery, and to possess an inexhaustible attraction for some sections of public opinion. All the statements and explanations, therefore, only whetted the appetite for more. Ultimately an undertaking had to be given that the correspondence should be deposited, for the information of his successors, in the archives of the Foreign Office whenever Lord Granville left it, and the controversy at length subsided—though its mutterings continued to be heard down to the last days of Mr. Gladstone's Government in

1885, and was revived when, very shortly before the fall of the Government in that year, the draft of a letter written by Mr. Errington in the House of Commons, but never sent, found its way in an inaccurate shape into the columns of 'United Ireland.' In this draft he had spoken of 'keeping the Vatican in good humour' while the question of the appointment to the Archbishopric of Dublin was in suspense, and also asked for some information as regarded the course to be pursued by the Government of India with regard to the Archbishopric of Goa.[1]

While these attempts to rally the Roman Church to the side of order in Ireland were exciting opposition in the House of Commons, the Irish administration of the Government was exercising a disintegrating effect in a very different quarter. The Whig peers began one by one to leave the ship, because they considered that the law was not being effectually supported. It has been seen how already in 1880 Lord Fitzwilliam had threatened to withdraw his support from the Liberal party, and he now practically withdrew it. The Duke of Bedford also intimated that it would be difficult for him to support the Ministry much longer. These withdrawals, however, did not affect the framework of the Government itself. But soon the sphere of official life also began to be affected. In the early part of 1880 Lord Lansdowne resigned the Under-Secretaryship for India owing to the Compensation for Disturbance Bill, a measure which amended and extended the Land Act of 1870; and the Duke of Argyll was with difficulty persuaded to remain in office a little longer. The resignations of prominent men were only the outward sign of the deep unrest which disturbed the general body of the

[1] At the conclusion of these events in 1885 Mr. Gladstone wrote Mr. Errington the following letter:

*June* 30, 1885.

'Dear Mr. Errington,—I read your letter with pleasure, and I cordially congratulate you on a well-earned honour. Differences there may be as to the basis, but there can be no question as to your action upon that basis—as to its loyalty, energy, intelligence and self-denial, and it would indeed have been an impotent conclusion to the whole matter had such labours remained without acknowledgment.

'Believe me, most faithfully yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

party, and in the House of Lords rendered the task of Lord Granville more and more difficult, especially as between his own views and those of the dissentient Liberal peers there was an increasing divergence which was not confined to the Land Act only.

'Lowe's plan about Irish land [Lord Granville had written to Lord Spencer in 1869] is to establish courts of arbitration, or rather a chairman of quarter sessions, to adjudicate without regard to law upon all cases of injury whether by the landlord against the tenant, or the tenant against the landlord. This is just one of those plans which would be good if there were any general agreement about the constitution of such courts; but the landlords, and perhaps the tenants, would object to the number of third-rate lawyers deciding in their different districts questions affecting property without any regard to the present principles of law, and without any new principles being laid down for their guidance. . . .

'If I were an autocrat, I would release all the Fenians, notwithstanding the bluster of their friends; but as you are not quite in that position, and have a very difficult task before you, you had better do nothing at present for them. If your Land Bill passes, notwithstanding sufficient opposition to make it popular in Ireland, and you could release them before fresh demands were made, it would probably do much good.'[1]

Lord Granville believed that there was a reasonable opinion in Ireland, lying between the two extremes of the Orange party, which he regarded as the greatest curse of Ireland, and the National party. To this body of opinion he thought a courageous appeal could be made, with a reasonable prospect of success.

'My language has been to Clarendon, and will be to Lowe [he wrote], that the settlement of this question requires much give and take—that this process will be especially required in the Cabinet, and that the danger to be apprehended is not only on one side. To tell the truth, I am not sure the language in Ireland is so alarming as it seems. They always ask for more than they expect to get, and they make allowance for exaggerations to which they all are prone.'[2]

In 1881 his views on these subjects remained unaltered. But neither in 1870 nor in 1881, notwithstanding the

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, October 6, 14, 1869.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, September 29, 1869.

prominent position occupied by land legislation in the record of the two Governments of Mr. Gladstone, will Lord Granville's name be in any special manner associated with the history of that legislation. In the House of Lords the discussions chiefly concentrated themselves around a mass of intricate legal details affecting tenure. To the elucidation of these he did not pretend to bring either special knowledge or personal aptitude, and they were in consequence left by him entirely in the hands of experts such as Lord Carlingford and Lord Selborne, while he confined himself to the duty of acting as the honest broker of divergent opinions among his colleagues, urging on all 'the duty of loyal co-operation in settling the difficulty in which the country was placed,'[1] for it seemed clear to him that if Mr. Gladstone's Government 'could not find a solution of the Irish question, it would be almost impossible for any other to do so.' 'I am not a lawyer nor a practical landowner,' he warned Mr. Gladstone;[2] and he was inclined to regard the question of land tenures more as a portion of the Irish question as a whole, and as itself the child of the political circumstances of the country, than as an independent problem. It used to be commonly argued that if the land question could be settled, the political question would settle itself. Lord Granville was inclined to believe that the converse might be equally true, and that if the government and administration of Ireland could be brought into harmony with the wishes of the people, a long step would thereby have been taken to remove the bitterness between the owners and the occupiers of the land.

A Coercion Act had been passed in 1879.

'I was a party to it [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone in the following year]; but, wise after the event, it seems to have been a mistake. To go on with the old habit of Coercion Acts more or less efficient, without showing a determination to introduce remedial measures on sound principles, is not a policy which I should support.'[3]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 21, 1880.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 23, 1869.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 21, 1880.

Lord Granville was in fact becoming more and more persuaded that the absence of any real sense of responsibility on the part of the people of Ireland for the management and administration of their own affairs was the root evil of the country, and he was at this moment one of the strongest supporters in the Cabinet of the introduction of a large measure of local self-government as soon as the condition of business permitted it.[1] In 1877 he had already expressed this opinion to Mr. Gladstone with reference to some overtures made by Mr. Butt, then the leader of the Irish party, suggesting, 'that some concessions might beneficially be made to the Irish in the matter of self-government,' and that they would be very desirous to hear in what direction and how far Mr. Gladstone thought it could be done.

'Butt's letter [he wrote], a fair one from his point of view, shows a wish to come on his own terms to an arrangement with the Liberal party, or at least with a portion of it. But what with the disjointed state of the Home Rulers, and the feeling of the Nonconformists and others in England and Scotland, any understanding with him now appears to me to be dangerous and premature.

'The difficulties about Irish University education are great, and must be felt by you more than by most people.

'With regard to the Manchester prisoners, the thing ought to be done, if possible, by a Government and not by an Opposition. If I remember right, in our Cabinet, you, Bright, and I were the most inclined to leniency. I suspect if MacMahon or the Emperor of Austria were exactly in the same position, public opinion in this country would be entirely for their giving an amnesty.'[2]

Notwithstanding every appeal, the Duke of Argyll in April 1881 resigned his seat in the Cabinet. Almost simultaneously the Duke of Bedford informed Lord Granville that the support which he had hitherto given could no longer be relied upon in the House of Lords, and that in consequence he felt it his duty to tender also the resignation by the Duchess of Bedford of the highest appointment at Court—that of Mistress of the Robes—which she held.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, September 15, 1881. In this letter Lord Granville speaks of local government under the name of 'Home Rule.'

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 21, 1877.

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *January* 14, 1881.

'MY DEAR ARGYLL,—Your note filled me with dismay. I saw Gladstone, Hartington, and Spencer on the subject of it.

'I try to put aside my feelings of regret at losing you as a colleague—at missing your counsel about foreign affairs, and your support in defending our policy in the Lords.

'But it appears to me that the responsibility you are taking is very great—to aim such a blow so soon at Gladstone's Government, to give such a triumph to the Tories, to give such a stimulus to the House of Lords to put themselves in collision with the House of Commons, with all the results that may happen in Ireland.

'I do not go into the merits of the question; there is much to be said on both sides. Many of your arguments are logically excellent. But even from that point of view, by going away, are you strengthening principles which you desire to maintain? Are you not playing the game like Carnarvon did with regard to the Eastern question—weakening Derby, and leaving the field more open for those who have the most extreme objects in view?

'Gladstone will be most anxious to meet you; but do not press him too far.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF BEDFORD.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *January* 26, 1881.

'MY DEAR DUKE,—Gladstone showed me confidentially your letter. It has given me the greatest concern, both on public and personal grounds.

'I have always thought that the action of the great aristocratic leaders of the Liberal party at important crises, like the great Reform Bill, the repeal of the Corn Laws, and others, though sometimes opposed to their feelings and wishes, had been of signal advantage to the country. I am afraid that their appearance now as advisers to the Lords to damage the Irish Land Bill will have anything but a Conservative result. Personally your constant and unfailing support has been invaluable to me, when attacked by so many of my own political friends. I do not try to influence you in any course you have decided upon, but to express a hope that you will meet Gladstone's wish about delay. To me, who see all he has to face, his claim to consideration appears very great.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

The post of Lord Privy Seal, vacated by the Duke of Argyll, was accepted by Lord Carlingford, who, both as a considerable Irish landowner and as Chief Secretary to the Lord Lieutenant in the days of Lord Russell and in the first Administration of Mr. Gladstone, was eminently fitted for the post. Some had expected a different choice. 'What a brilliant speech Rosebery seems to have made!' Lord Granville had written in November 1878; 'Adam says he is becoming a great power in Scotland,'[1] and when the Liberal Government was formed in 1880 a place had accordingly been offered to Lord Rosebery. He at the moment declined it, fearing that public opinion would see in it an equivalent for the electoral support which he had given to Mr. Gladstone in his election campaign in Mid-Lothian. He had not, however, intended to abandon the hope indefinitely of undertaking higher responsibilities. The Duke of Argyll had been regarded as the special expositor of the views of Scotland in the Cabinet and in Parliament, and when he resigned office, Lord Rosebery thought therefore that the moment had come for Mr. Gladstone to recognise his claims to be the Duke's successor in the Cabinet, or that he would at least have consulted him on the position created by the Duke's resignation, especially as certain arrangements connected with the administration of Scottish affairs and their representation in Parliament, in his opinion, required alteration and adjustment.

LORD GRANVILLE TO SIR WILLIAM HARCOURT.

WALMER, *April* 16, 1881.

'MY DEAR HARCOURT,—Thanks for your note, though its contents grieved me much. I do not think Rosebery has any grounds for complaint as to not having been consulted about the Privy Seal.

'Gladstone, as you know, hardly consulted anybody.

'There was only a question of three persons, one of whom was immediately put aside. It would be contrary to all usage and convenience to consult one of two persons who were considered for an office; and to make excuses to Rosebery after his honourable reasons for not taking office, would have been almost an insult.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, November 10, 1878.

'The larger question is different. With Rosebery's great position in Scotland, chiefly created by himself, his extraordinary power of speaking, and the great services he has rendered the party, any one must be blind who does not see the advantage of having him in the Government. But at this moment Gladstone's thoughts, as they well may be, are concentrated on the Land Bill. The particular fitness of Carlingford, an Irishman and so much connected with the Land Bill, indicated him to Gladstone in a way which in no other case would occur.[1]

'In all other matters there is no comparison between the strength of the two men.

'My position in the House of Lords will soon be unbearable. I do not mind the opposition of many of our cave, but the defection of one personal friend after another is most painful. I must, however, grin and bear it. But I should be deeply grieved if anything happened to separate Rosebery and Gladstone. The latter thinks, and is possibly right in so thinking, that his own political career will not last very much longer. Rosebery's friendship and connection with him will be a great point in history. It would be lamentable if it were severed or weakened, particularly so if in a way that would possibly lead to any misconstruction as to motives.

'Yours, G.'

Notwithstanding the passing of the Land Act of 1880, the condition of Ireland had grown graver all through the winter of 1881–82. The agitation, so far from having been checked, seemed, on the contrary, to have been stimulated by it. One Coercion Act had succeeded another. Yet order was not restored, nor was the law vindicated. Mr. Parnell and other leaders of the Irish party were imprisoned. Lord Cowper, the Viceroy, nevertheless considered that he was being insufficiently supported, and placed, as he considered himself to be, in a false position, he threatened resignation. The idea, in that event, of asking Lord Spencer, then President of the Council, to return to the Viceroyalty, which he had filled in Mr. Gladstone's first Administration with admitted success in equally perilous times, was in consequence being discussed, while efforts were

[1] Lord Rosebery shortly afterwards accepted the post of Under Secretary to the Home Office, where he hoped that his knowledge of Scotch affairs might find a special and appropriate sphere in the internal work of that department. He resigned it in June 1883.

made to come to terms with Mr. Parnell through unofficial channels.

'You would have been a good clergyman, a first-rate lawyer, and the greatest of generals, but you would have been an indifferent Fouché in dealing with the Post Office.' Such were the pithy words in which Lord Granville summed up some of the characteristics of the Prime Minister in a postscript to a letter written to him in 1883, alluding apparently to a correspondence in regard to Irish affairs conducted through Mr. O'Shea, who, Lord Granville observed, was 'not as good or orthodox a means of communication as Lord Richard Grosvenor,' at that time the principal whip of the Liberal party. The events arising out of this correspondence ended in the release of Mr. Parnell from Kilmainham, the resignation of Lord Cowper and Mr. Forster, and the return of Lord Spencer to Ireland as Viceroy with Lord Frederick Cavendish as Chief Secretary.[1]

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER, *April* 8, 1882.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Spencer arrived here yesterday evening. He showed me your letter, and I told him of your wish that I should talk out the Irish question with him. He was, as you may suppose, perfectly straightforward and public-spirited. He dislikes the idea of resuming his old post, but he will do anything you are clearly of opinion may be necessary or useful. He likes his present office, and is much interested in several questions now pending there.[2] He thinks it is a great disadvantage to him to lose the attendance at Cabinets at this moment of importance, and when you are presiding over them.

'He does not see his way to any great or immediate improvement in Irish affairs, though much may be done with care and patience. One of his great difficulties is Forster. He likes him, and thinks it impossible to say that anyone would have done better under the circumstances. But he is a strong man, a Cabinet Minister, fond of work, and not afraid of responsibility. The position at first was a difficult one for a Lord Lieutenant to hold his due place. It will be extremely so after Forster has monopolised for two years

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 8, 1882, February 28, 1883.

[2] The reference is to the question of public elementary education. An Act amending the Act of 1870 had been passed in 1881. Lord Spencer was Lord President, and in that capacity was responsible for Education.

the labour and the responsibility. He thinks it difficult to settle for two months what is to be done about coercion or its substitutes. But he would not like to undertake the change without a knowledge of the general lines on which our policy is to rest.

'He believes there are objections to the Lord Lieutenant being a member of the Cabinet. His post is in one sense of a different character, and the position as Cabinet Minister would be chiefly of an honorary character. But he thinks that criticism would not be strong at the present moment on such an arrangement, and it might strengthen him in the difficulty of his relations with the Chief Secretary. He is anxious about Cowper's position in any change.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

The political situation which Lord Spencer found in Ireland was sufficiently difficult in itself. But to the tale of public confusion, the story of private calamity had soon to be added. The new Viceroy had not been more than a few hours in Ireland, before Lord Frederick Cavendish, and with him the permanent Under-Secretary, Mr. Bourke, were assassinated in the Phœnix Park. By the death of the former the whole of the great family connection to which Lord Granville belonged was plunged into mourning. The nation grieved over the loss of a rising statesman whom it believed capable of filling with distinction the highest posts of government and administration; and a large circle of friends had to lament the death of one endeared to them by the possession of every private virtue.

'I have never known a finer or higher nature [Lord Granville told the House of Lords]. He was absolutely without personal vanity, without any love of display; but his great ability, his knowledge, and his industry, only required a difficult position in order to show the metal of which he was made. He was reluctant to leave the office which he filled so well; but like a soldier he obeyed without one moment's hesitation the call of duty to a place of enormous difficulty. He has suffered death, but one glorious to himself, dying as he did in the service of his country. That death has left a noble woman desolate, and may we all join in her most courageous prayer at this moment that God may influence the results of this fearful crime in a manner contrary to the hopes and expectations of its perpetrators, and that it may result in the eventual good of Ireland.'[1]

[1] *Hansard*, cclxix. 315, 316, May 8, 1882.

The Liberal party found itself exposed to the cross-fire of the party of anarchy in Ireland and of the Conservative Opposition in Parliament. The crime in the Phœnix Park was looked upon by an ill-informed public opinion in England as only so much fresh evidence of the failure of the policy of conciliation.

'The motive of the dastardly criminals [Lord Granville wrote to the Queen] was, on the contrary, indignation on the part of the American Irish Fenians at that which they consider the treachery of the lately imprisoned members of Parliament, and a hope by a striking outrage to excite the anger of the people of England, and to prevent the chance of a pacification of Ireland.'

Mr. Gladstone was at this time more persistently than ever talking of resignation, and for some time past had been complicating the situation by insisting on discussing all Cabinet arrangements on the hypothesis that he might again shortly repeat the *coup de tête* of 1875. His colleagues could observe no signs of failing in his marvellous powers, and Sir Andrew Clark told Lord Granville that of all the people he had ever known in his long medical experience, Mr. Gladstone under ordinary circumstances had the best chance of living to be a centenarian, because he not only was sound from head to foot and careful in all his habits, but was built in the most perfect proportion of all the parts of the human frame to each other, heads, legs, arms, and body, without a flaw, like an ancient Greek statue of the ideal man. Nevertheless Mr. Gladstone himself was constantly justifying his own wish for retirement by pointing out signs of occasional lapses in his marvellous memory, and declaring them to be the omens of an approaching break-up.

'To you, who have the trunk of an elephant [Lord Granville wrote to him on one of these occasions, when the Prime Minister had been more than usually persistent], it may seem odd, but to me, who unfortunately am differently constituted, it does not seem so, that in the midst of all the anxiety about Ireland in November 1880, you should not have paid much attention to the Borneo question, or now remember details.' [1]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, January 23, 1882.

Nevertheless Mr. Gladstone was greatly depressed. It was suggested that he might lighten his load by separating the Chancellorship of the Exchequer from the First-Lordship of the Treasury, and allowing the former to be held by another member of the Cabinet, thereby making a place in the Cabinet for Lord Derby, whom many Liberals desired to see included in it. The most popular suggestion of the time was that Mr. Childers, then Secretary of State for War, should go to the Exchequer, and that Lord Derby should become one of the Secretaries of State.

'Derby [Lord Granville wrote] would be a great acquisition, owing to his position, and personal character. He is at the same time popular with the Liberals, and supposed to be a Conservative element by the nervous. I should like to see him at the India Office. He would sanction no military follies, and he is anxious to effect financial reforms there. [But there were, he knew, many who would object.] Even so anti-Jingo a personage as my brother told me a little time ago at Walmer that he wished to see Derby in the Government, but not at the India or the Foreign Office.'[1]

Any suggestion of Mr. Gladstone's own retirement Lord Granville altogether declined to entertain.

'I quite agree in normal cases [he told the Prime Minister] that a man near or beyond seventy years of age, who entered the public service some fifty years earlier, may, even without a complete breakdown of health, claim to retire from active work. But I have always declined to discuss the future with you on the basis of your voluntary retirement at a fixed date, and indeed have felt confident that you would find it impossible.

'Your case is not normal. Your bodily and mental strength are exceptionally strong. What young or middle-aged man possesses in an equal degree the capacity which you describe as necessary for a Prime Minister, and which you apprehend may fail you? The hold you have on the country is extraordinary; the power you possess to confer further advantages on it is exceptional.

'It may seem unfriendly to you, although you will not believe it to be so, but I cannot aid or abet you in striking such a blow on the Liberal party, and one which they would so deeply deplore and I fear resent.'[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 25, 1881.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 28, 1882,

Mr. Gladstone was at length persuaded to be satisfied with retiring from the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Other changes followed, and by the end of 1882 the Government had been largely reconstructed. After the assassination of Lord Frederick Cavendish, Sir George Trevelyan had become Chief Secretary for Ireland. Mr. Childers now succeeded Mr. Gladstone as Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Hartington left the India for the War Office; Lord Kimberley became Secretary of State for India; Lord Derby succeeded Lord Kimberley as Secretary of State for the Colonies; Mr. Dodson resigned the Presidency of the Local Government Board, and took the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster which had not been filled up since Mr. Bright's retirement; and Sir Charles Dilke entered the Cabinet as President of the Local Government Board.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *November* 29, 1882.

'I have seen Derby, and he will send me an answer to-morrow morning.

'I should say it would be in the affirmative, but I had the same conviction at the end of my first interview last summer.

'He questioned me on—

'1. Home Rule. I alluded to your public declarations, and said my opinion was strongly in favour of letting the Irish settle their local affairs; that the subject had not been recently discussed in the Cabinet, and that there were some who did not like any local government for the Irish on the ground that they used such institutions as weapons against the Imperial Government, that I did not attach importance to this objection, but that I was strongly opposed to any plan which *really* weakened the connection. He said that he was not opposed to local government in Ireland, but was strongly averse to any assembly sitting at Dublin.

'2. Egypt. He presumed that you and I wished to get out of it as soon as we could properly do so. I assented, adding that I was sanguine by nature, and I did not believe the difficulties would be overwhelming.

'3. Local Government. He does not attach much importance to the question.

'He asked what office he was likely to have the offer of. I said

I was not authorised to offer him any, that I knew you would only offer him one of high rank, and I hinted at India. He thought that was an office of great interest.

'He asked what other additions there were to be to the Cabinet.

'I told him I could not say, but I mentioned Dilke as a person on the threshold. He praised him highly.

'He asked about amendments of the Land Bill. I answered that there might be amendments necessary; but that even if they were good, there would be a disinclination to stir them unnecessarily.'

Having reconstituted his Cabinet, Mr. Gladstone consented to spend a portion of the winter in the Riviera in order to face the session of 1883 with undiminished strength. 'A great admirer of his'—one who thought his statesmanship more profound than his philosophy—found him there in February occupying every spare moment in his favourite theological studies; and he trembled to think what might occur if the Prime Minister retired. 'He will become, from being a man of genius and power, a tiresome homilist.' But there are questions to which neither statesmanship nor theology can reply. Mr. Gladstone was asked one day in February if he could satisfy an inquiry addressed to another visitor to the Riviera, Lady Queensberry, by her little daughter, whom she had told that Mr. Gladstone was 'Governor of England.' 'But how,' the little lady had replied, 'can he govern England when he is eating bread and butter here with me?'[1] And so before March was over, Mr. Gladstone, abandoning controversial theology, hurried back to England, where he found his colleagues involved in the struggles which had arisen out of the occupation of Egypt. One encouraging gleam there was amid their anxieties. It came from the far West. Lord Granville had just succeeded in renewing diplomatic relations with the Republic of Mexico, interrupted ever since the death of Maximilian. The difficulties had hitherto baffled all his predecessors. But in July 1883, at an interval of sixteen years, a British Envoy, Sir Spencer St. John, was again received by the President; and the complaints of British commerce at the long suspension of intercourse were at last at an end.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, February 23, 1883.

# CHAPTER IX

## EGYPT

## 1883–1884

AT the end of 1882, Lord Dufferin, who had succeeded Mr. Goschen as Ambassador at Constantinople, was sent on a special mission to Egypt to advise on the reorganisation of the country.

'One of the most difficult questions with which we have to deal [Lord Granville wrote to him], and one which must not be shirked, is the possibility of the Suez Canal being used on some future occasion in the same way as Lesseps tried to use it the other day. It is a matter on which French chauvinism is more likely to be excited than the Control.

'We have two weapons against the Company, the defect of which is that they are both rather too strong: the legal argument that the Company have given ground to the Khédive to withdraw the Concession; the other, that we may encourage a rival Canal from Alexandria to Suez by Cairo.'[1]

In regard to the Control, Lord Granville wrote as follows to Mr. Gladstone:—

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *October* 2, 1882.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I agree with you that the Control must be abandoned. I do not think the French will struggle much for it, but will try to substitute something in which they have a fair share.

'I am not sure that it has absolutely failed.

'It may have been unpopular, but as long as the Englishman and

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, November 16, 1882. Lord Dufferin remained in Egypt until May 1883.

Frenchman acted together, and retained their moral power—for they had no absolute power—they did good work. The suspension of their work during the late crisis is not conclusive against them either for the past or for the future.

'And I do not think that the Control can be said to have lapsed. In order to put an end to it, it will require a revision of the Khédivial decree appointing it, and it will be better if possible to have a previous agreement with the French.

'It is important that the decree treated it as a provisional arrangement.

'Salisbury, without consulting the Office, was persuaded by Blignières to agree to this arrangement, which was substituted for Goschen's plan which gave predominance to England.

'It has the inherent faults of the Controller's having no real power and no real responsibility—of all good working depending entirely upon the good understanding of the two men who are to work it. It is unpopular in Egypt, and excites jealousy in Europe.

'Yours, G.'

On January 3, 1883, a circular despatch to the Powers was issued from the Foreign Office. In this despatch, which still remains the original charter of British policy in Egypt, Lord Granville had to recognise the existence of two sets of conflicting facts. The first and most essential feature of the situation was that, owing to the refusal of military co-operation by the other Powers, Great Britain had become responsible, unwillingly and by the force of circumstances, for the good administration of Egypt. The second and not less important feature was the existence of the Conventions by which the Powers had placed Egypt under a system of tutelage, partly aiming at the prevention of the interference of the Porte and partly intended to control the maladministration of the Egyptian officials themselves. These Conventions had, in a word, been framed to provide for a condition of affairs which the English occupation was certain to terminate, but which that occupation had nevertheless technically not abrogated. Lord Granville had also to avoid offending either of the two opposite schools of opinion in England, one of which called for an early evacuation of the country, while the other demanded the vigorous assertion of British control, and, conveniently forgetting the

existence of the Conventions, was constantly urging on the Government to recognise that, after the suppression of Arabi's revolt, they were now practically masters of Egypt, and ought to assume the full responsibilities of government. The glory of an assumption of a formal Protectorate afforded an easy theme for rhetoric in both Houses of Parliament, but the fact was overlooked that an immediate denunciation of the Conventions, and of much else besides, was required in order to make a Protectorate either legal or effective. The despatch of January 3, therefore, was compelled to steer a middle course.

'I am asked [Lord Granville said in reply to Lord Salisbury] to state the exact date of the withdrawal of the troops. I cannot conceive that it would be prudent to make such a statement. We shall not keep our troops in Egypt any longer than is necessary; but it would be an act of treachery to ourselves, to Egypt, and to Europe, if we withdrew them without having a certainty—or, if not a certainty, because we cannot have a certainty in the affairs of this life, until there is a reasonable expectation—of a stable, a permanent, and a beneficial Government being established in Egypt. The noble Marquess says that our influence in Egypt consists in our troops, and that when they are withdrawn the memory of their prowess will fade away. But before the expedition and under the Joint Control, there is no doubt that our influence was very strong, and that influence has, I believe, been increased by the events of the last six months.'[1]

Following this line of thought, the despatch of January 3 pointed out that events stronger than any human prevision had thrown upon England the duty of putting down the movement of Arabi Pasha. This duty had been performed, and although it was unavoidable in consequence that a British force should for some time longer remain in Egypt, the Government were desirous of withdrawing it whenever their task in Egypt was accomplished. The principal heads of that task were as follows. It would be necessary to secure for ever the free navigation of the Suez Canal; and to make it neutral in time of war, and open equally to the commerce of all the nations of the world in time of peace. In the region

[1] *Hansard*, cclxxvi. 41, 42.

of domestic affairs, the better management of the Daira Estates, the equal treatment in regard to taxation of foreigners and natives, the continuance of the mixed tribunals in civil suits between natives and foreigners, were necessary. The formation of a small but efficient Egyptian army under foreign officers, and the substitution of an efficient *gendarmerie* for the native police, were next mentioned; and finally the appointment of a European Financial Adviser in the place of the Dual Control was announced as called for by the altered circumstances of the hour. It was also hoped to form some kind of native representative assembly, in order to interest the people outside the old Turkish governing class in the good administration of the country.

The concluding suggestions of the despatch sounded the knell of the Dual Control. Sir Auckland Colvin, the British Controller, immediately resigned, and a Khédivial decree quickly followed, abolishing the office. An invitation was given by Lord Granville to France to nominate a candidate for the office of Financial Adviser, but the answer was a protest that the Control could only be abolished by the consent of all the parties concerned. Sir Auckland Colvin was thereupon appointed Financial Adviser, and was succeeded shortly afterwards, on receiving a high appointment in India, by Mr. Edgar Vincent, whom financial ability and knowledge of the East rendered eminently fit to fill this responsible office at a critical juncture of affairs. The abolition of the Control met with the full approval of Prince Bismarck, partly because it terminated the dangers of a *condominium*, partly because it was an act of vigour. The French Government, conscious by this time of the mistake which it had made in refusing to join the intervention in 1882, soon began to suspect that it had made an analogous blunder in the region of finance. But the position of Great Britain in Egypt was none the less difficult in consequence. To reorganise the administration of a country, and at the same time to admit only a divided responsibility; and to dictate measures intended to be permanent, while announcing that the authority controlling them is temporary, is

a situation perhaps the most impossible, regarded by the cold light of abstract wisdom, in which a Government can be placed. Yet the open assumption of the real government of Egypt was impossible for one set of reasons: the evacuation of the country was out of the question for another. Mr. Chamberlain was said at this time to have described Lord Granville's policy as 'childishly insincere;'[1] yet no other policy was possible. The very scene of events itself suggested the idea of a dubious situation, for according to the ancients, between the Isthmus of Suez and the Delta of the Nile lay the site of the old Serbonian bog, said to have been a quaking morass intermixed with treacherous sand-hills, which afforded no solid ground to those who sought refuge on them from the surrounding quagmire, but yielded under the pressure of the human foot, and allowed the traveller to be engulfed in the slime below. One set of conditions made evacuation impossible; another made the announcement of a permanent or even a prolonged control of the country equally impossible, for such an announcement would have immediately incurred the risk of serious troubles with France. At every step the susceptibilities of both British and of foreign opinion had to be taken into account. Hovering on one side, in an uncertain perspective, was the elusive phantom of retirement; on the other, there flitted the constant suggestion of a possible collision with France made by those who found it a convenient weapon of debate at Westminster and in the French Chambers.

The essential quality of Lord Granville's mind was patience; but as applied to the Egyptian question this quality was not the expression of a mere theoretical belief in the healing qualities of time, so much as the conviction that events were certain to fight in the Mediterranean on the side of a great country with sound finances and a powerful navy. Meanwhile the conditions of the final solution of the problem were evidently not yet in existence. Not Great Britain only but all the Great Powers were as men feeling their way in a fog. The coming years alone could untie the knot, and show

[1] Sir Charles Dilke's notes.

if and how evacuation might be possible, or if a permanent occupation would have to be established. It was necessary not to try to anticipate events, to avoid all violent courses, to decline to take notice of provocations, and to push on the improvement of the administration of the country, which if successfully carried out was certain to produce one of two results: either to render evacuation possible, or to render the British occupation welcome to all the Great Powers as a legitimate counterweight to the recent occupation of Tunis by France, and acceptable even to France owing to the increase in value of the interests of the French bondholders which the British Control was certain to cause.

With Mr. Edgar Vincent other able men had been selected by Lord Granville and Lord Hartington to assist in the improvement of the Egyptian administration; but because Sir Evelyn Wood and Colonel Baker could not create an army and a *gendarmerie* by a stroke of magic, because Colonel Scott Moncrieff was unable to complete in a month the great works of reclamation and river control which it has taken twenty years to effect, because Sir Benson Maxwell could not reform the Egyptian tribunals by a wave of the hand, because Mr. Vincent had to deal not with ordinary financial difficulties, but with artificial complications either created or aggravated by French and Russian influences, because Mr. Clifford Lloyd—whose selection was perhaps not the happiest of these appointments—required time to cope with the long accumulated evils of Egyptian prison administration, every step these distinguished men took was made the object of almost daily attack and misrepresentation in the House of Commons for party purposes, in order to discredit the Government. 'Look,' said Mr. Gladstone in after years, 'at the whole conduct of the Opposition from '80 to '85: every principle was flung overboard, if they could manufacture a combination against the Government.'[1] The network of foreign consular privileges and international jurisdictions described in a previous chapter was everywhere at hand to hamper the Egyptian Ministers, and became more

[1] *Life of Mr. Gladstone*, iii. 475.

and more annoying in proportion as the Government entered on the path of reform. Of this, the affair in April 1884 of the *Bosphore Égyptien*, a scurrilous French newspaper, was a remarkable illustration; for there 'France the aggressor was in the right, and the much-enduring Egyptian Government was in the wrong,'[1] because the publisher of the newspaper was able to find a correct technical protection behind privileges accorded to French subjects under the capitulations which had been intended to deal with a totally different state of affairs. It might have been supposed by any uninstructed hearer of the Parliamentary debates that all the long accumulated evils of Oriental administration in Egypt had been the recent and deliberate creation of the British Government. Thus when cholera in its most terrific form broke out in June 1883, and the Foreign Office, under the advice of Sir Joseph Fayrer, sent Sir Guyer Hunter and a staff of surgeons to Egypt, in order to cope with the dreaded epidemic,[2] there were utterances in and out of Parliament from which it might have been supposed that the defective sanitary conditions with which almost for the first time an honest attempt was being made to grapple, had their origin in the perversity and neglect of Downing Street. Attacks in Parliament frequently encourage the enemies of the country abroad; and following these assaults from domestic critics, violent statements quickly followed in France, attributing the outbreak to criminal carelessness on the part of the British Government in allowing persons on their way home from India to land in Egypt; and the insinuations made in France soon evoked a sympathetic echo in Germany. Even the *Bosphore Égyptien* found its champions on the Conservative benches. The party in the House of Commons, almost entirely recruited among Mr. Gladstone's own followers, which desired the immediate evacuation of Egypt, was also constantly pressing that the general undertaking given by Lord Granville that the British troops should leave the country when their task had been performed, should at least

[1] Milner, *Egypt*, p. 98.

[2] *Life of Sir Joseph Fayrer*, p. 440.

be construed as implying a very early performance of that undertaking, for they judged—and the sequel has so far proved that they were right—that the evacuation was just as likely to be delayed as to be hastened by the reform of the native institutions.

Early in 1883 some negotiations which were undertaken in regard to a proposal for building a second or parallel Canal to the existing Canal through the Isthmus of Suez, became the origin of fresh trouble.

'If there is to be a new Canal [Mr. Bright said in the House of Commons, speaking as an independent member], we must do one of two things. We must either act with France or against France. I should not say against, but with. . . . The Government and the Foreign Office have been appealed to. I do not think I can doubt what will be the course that Lord Granville and his colleagues will take.'

But agreement with France in 1883 was not easy. In the negotiations which now began, it was proposed that the existing Company, of which the legal domicile was in France, should be entrusted with the construction of a new Canal. But when the Convention was published—the negotiation of the terms of which, as they mainly turned on financial considerations, had been entrusted to Mr. Childers as Chancellor of the Exchequer—public opinion pronounced that the concessions which had been obtained from M. de Lesseps in regard to the representation of British interests on the Board of Direction and in regard to the shipping dues in the Canal, were insufficient.[1] On July 23, Lord Granville had accordingly to announce that the Government did not intend to proceed further. M. de Lesseps then came to London, and a series of interviews between him and Lord Granville removed previous misunderstandings, and convinced the able founder of the Canal that his own interests lay in a good understanding with Great Britain, and that the days of Arabi were definitely over. M. de Lesseps then entered at once into negotiations with a body consisting of the ship-owners and others most interested in the navigation of

[1] *Life of Mr. Childers*, by Lieutenant-Colonel Spencer Childers, vol. ii. ch. xiii.

the Canal. Under the immediate auspices of Mr. Chamberlain, then President of the Board of Trade, a voluntary agreement was drawn up by which, in addition to the three existing official directors who had occupied seats on the Board since the purchase of the Khédive's shares, seven new directors chosen from among English shipowners and merchants were admitted to the Board of Control by the existing Company, and a Comité Consultatif was formed in London consisting of English directors. Arrangements were also made for paying shipping dues in London, and for the increase of the number of officials speaking English employed in the transit service of the Company. Substantial reductions in the tariff, and the enlargement of the existing Canal, were also agreed upon, in the interest of the commerce passing through the Canal, 80 per cent. of which was at this date British. The unpopularity which had attached itself to the Government in consequence of the failure of the first negotiation was thus largely removed. But although it had been found possible to come to terms with M. de Lesseps about the Canal, the maintenance of good relations with France was becoming daily a matter of far greater difficulty.

On the fall of M. de Freycinet's Ministry on July 29, 1882, M. Duclerc had become Prime Minister and Minister of Foreign Affairs. It was an essentially weak Government, and fell in February 1883 through its own incapacity. Then at length out of the welter and confusion emerged the second Ministry of M. Jules Ferry, with M. Challemel Lacour as Minister of Foreign Affairs. But before the year was over, M. Ferry had become his own Foreign Minister.[1] In order to divert attention both from internal divisions and the Eastern frontier, he plunged into a series of adventures in China, in Tonquin, in Burmah, in Siam, in Madagascar, and in Central Africa, which were intended to occupy the attention of the French electorate and to satisfy the ambition of the nation for glory, without incurring the danger or expense of a war with a great European Power. It was part of the same policy to keep up a continual series of

[1] In November 1882.

patriotic annoyances against England in Egypt and in the basin of the Mediterranean. The failure, owing to local opposition in Newfoundland, of the settlement of the fishery question made about this time by Lord Granville with France, still further increased the tension between the two countries. It is not necessary to state in detail the circumstances which were the pretext for hostilities between France and China, and which constituted a state of war, although no formal declaration of war ever took place.

'You do not tell me what you think of the transformation in the last pantomime [Lord Granville wrote to Lord Bath]. It is a bore having a row with the French. I always try to console myself by an observation of my mother, who was popular at Paris for eleven years, but said that in order to get on well in Paris society it was necessary to insult somebody once a month.'[1]

The adventures of France in China brought with them all those anxieties for England which any disturbance in China invariably causes, and at once created a number of minor questions connected with the right of blockade and the seizure of the goods of neutrals as contraband, the inevitable incidents of naval war, yet always dangerous to the maintenance of friendly relations. These risks were more than usually great from the character of some of the French diplomatic agents abroad. The attack on Madagascar especially raised serious issues in 1883. Admiral Pierre, the French commander in those seas, was probably suffering from the incipient stages of the disease of which he died before his return to France. At the moment when the French expedition at Tamatave landed, the British Consul Mr. Pakenham, who from his length of service and high character enjoyed the general confidence of all classes in the island, was dying. Nevertheless Admiral Pierre sent him a peremptory order—accompanied with what resembled threats of personal violence—to haul down his flag within four-and-twenty hours. On his refusing to do so the Consul's secretary was arrested in his presence, and the flag hauled down. Next day the Consul died, and it was

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Bath, December 29, 1882.

more than surmised that his death, though certain to have occurred, had been hastened by these violent scenes. Admiral Pierre next directed his attention to her Majesty's ship Dryad and to the mail steamer Taymouth Castle. He forbade the former to have access to the shore, and boarded the latter; placed a sentry on board; prohibited passengers landing; seized the control of the outgoing and incoming mails; and ended by even demanding the consular despatches. It was fortunate that Commander Johnston, of the Dryad, who by the death of Mr. Pakenham became Acting Consul, was an officer not only of great courage but of tact and resource. He succeeded in getting the despatches on board the Taymouth Castle, and himself on board the Dryad escorted her past the French guns till she was well out at sea and safe from capture. Meanwhile other outrages had been committed on shore. The English Protestant missionaries, most of whom were Nonconformists, had greatly contributed to the civilisation of the island, and were believed to be the most influential advisers of the Queen. They were therefore the special object of French hostility. Admiral Pierre seized one of their number, Mr. Shaw, and confined him on board ship under circumstances of great indignity and severity. It was some time before the full details of these events were accurately known in England, and it was fortunate, perhaps, that it was so. At the time no direct telegraphic communication with Madagascar existed, and the first complete and reliable account which arrived was contained in the despatches from the Mauritius of Sir John Pope-Hennessy, the Governor of the island. Those classes which in England as a rule are the strongest supporters of a peaceful policy were now precisely those most incensed at the treatment of Mr. Shaw. It was evident also that in the person of Mr. Pakenham an outrage had been offered to the British flag, and that a repetition of the once famous Pritchard affair of 1844 in Tahiti had taken place, but of a far more serious character. The immediate release of Mr. Shaw and reparation for these various insults was demanded by Lord Granville. Eventually the French

Government had to yield on every point. The death of Admiral Pierre, under circumstances pointing to insanity, afforded an opportunity to M. Ferry of making a retreat without loss of dignity. But the conduct of Admiral Pierre was only an extreme instance of the aggressive conduct in every corner of the world of French agents, most of them with connections in the press of Paris, who saw an opportunity of gaining a cheap personal reputation and promotion from Ministers who they believed would not venture to disapprove them.

Lord Granville regretted the impossibility of taking a stronger line against the French proceedings in Madagascar, owing to the situation in Egypt. He objected to a speech made at the end of December by Lord Derby 'giving away Madagascar' as he considered. Although it might be impossible to do anything effectual, he did not like Lord Derby saying so in public, and declared 'that it spoilt his play, if his colleagues let his French adversary look over his hand, and see how bad his cards were.'[1] One of the rare occasions when something like a real difference sprang up between him and Mr. Gladstone, was when the latter seemed at first not sufficiently to appreciate the courage and skill of Commander Johnston, and to be over-anxious to find excuses for Admiral Pierre, who, Mr. Gladstone thought, 'was not wrong in his general aim.'[2]

Owing to these events the maintenance of good relations with Germany became a matter of greater necessity than ever. The concluding months of 1882 and the early months of 1883 had seen a truce in the long struggle between Prince Bismarck and the Vatican. Concessions had to be made to the elusive ecclesiastical foe, and the journey of the Crown Prince to Rome to visit the Pope was described by German Liberals as 'another journey to Canossa.' A Church Bill embodying the concessions which the Prussian Parliament was willing to make was passed into law. By this measure, and by others intended to conciliate the working classes,

[1] Sir Charles Dilke's notes.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, September 1, 1883.

Prince Bismarck believed that he had quieted his most clamorous antagonists at home, both lay and ecclesiastical. But the prospect abroad was still disquieting. More than ever was the danger present to his mind of the necessity of effectively protecting the frontier on the east against Russia. A number of minor events also had only quite recently shown how easily some small occurrence might bring about a conflagration, and fan the smouldering passions of the French people into a white heat. The death of the Comte de Chambord was evidently near—it took place on August 23, 1883. The hopes of a fusion between the parties of the rival pretenders to the throne of France were consequently increasing, and were further stimulated by a series of Governmental crises which took place in January over the Bill directed against the dethroned families. A speech of Marshal von Manteuffel at Strasburg; the electoral address of M. Antoine—one of the candidates in Elsass-Lothringen for the Reichstag—and the prosecution which followed; the insult offered in Paris to the King of Spain when, shortly after being made colonel of a regiment of Uhlans in Berlin by the German Emperor, he visited the French capital in September 1883, and the mob of the capital chose to forget the King in the Prussian colonel: all these events cumulatively proved, notwithstanding the official assurances given at Berlin, on how slender a thread then hung the preservation of the peace of Europe. The colonial activities of M. Ferry's Government were therefore not unwelcome to the Chancellor, as they diverted the energies of France abroad; but he had no intention of allowing them to hamper British policy in Egypt.

Early in 1883 the Prince of Wales was at Berlin. Prince Bismarck confessed to Lord Ampthill that 'ill as he himself was,' he had been charmed by the Prince's conversation and fascinating manners,' and he took the opportunity of expressing an earnest hope that her Majesty's Government would not withdraw the troops from Egypt 'before safety and stability could be guaranteed by England to Europe.'[1]

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, March 3, 7, 1883.

Events were, however, marching so favourably that it was believed that a considerable reduction of the British military force would be possible before the year was over.

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE QUEEN.

*January* 7, 1883.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty. He has received Sir H. Ponsonby's letter on the proposed reduction of force in Egypt, and one from Lord Hartington on the same subject this morning.

'It would appear from the latter, that there is a difference of opinion among the military authorities on the proposal of a reduction of the British force, which on political grounds is strongly urged by Lord Dufferin and the civil authorities.

'It would appear that the Duke of Cambridge is opposed to the reduction, and that his Royal Highness thinks Sir A. Alison is opposed to it. Lord Hartington has sent Lord Granville a copy of Sir A. Alison's letter to the Duke. Lord Hartington is of opinion that this letter shows, what Lord Dufferin has said, that Sir A. Alison is not strongly opposed to the reduction, although he would prefer to keep a larger force.

'Lord Wolseley thinks that 5,000 men would have been ample in numbers when he came away—that there was really no possible enemy to guard against—that the question is purely political and not military. Lord Granville did not expect so early a proposal for a further reduction of the force, but he agrees with Lord Hartington that the political question as to the state of the country and the necessity for keeping a larger or smaller military force must be our guide.'

As the year advanced, the hopes of a possibility of a large reduction of the army of occupation became still more pronounced and the preliminary steps were actually being taken, when suddenly an unforeseen event plunged everything into confusion, and opened up a vista of new and unexpected issues.

The southern provinces of the Khédive's dominions, vaguely known as the Soudan, were at that time still part of the Egyptian Khédiviate. General Gordon had been Governor there till 1879. After his departure the government of the Egyptian pashas became unbearable. The only merit which

it could be said to possess was that it checked the slave trade; but merits and demerits alike conspired against it, for the slave owners and slave hunters were a large and influential class.

A personage claiming, like others before him, to be the Mahdi or last Prophet who is to appear before the final judgment, had arisen in Darfur, and, taking advantage of all these causes of discontent, had raised the flag of insurrection. The Mahomedan Calendar indicated the new year as that in which this predestined Messiah was to appear, a fact which now materially aided him. For some time the struggle between his forces and those of the Egyptian Government continued with varying success. At last the authorities at Cairo organised a large but motley force, and sent it under the command of Hicks Pasha—an English soldier of fortune—to crush the Prophet. Success at first smiled on his banners, but in the last week of 1883—the exact date is uncertain—the army of Hicks Pasha was completely annihilated in the Soudan. Not since the army of Pharaoh disappeared in the Red Sea, had any event occurred so dramatic in its completeness and so mysterious in its circumstances. It shattered the prestige of the native Government, and even if the victorious Mahdi did not carry his flag down the Nile, which he was certain to attempt to do, a rising was now possible in Egypt itself. Whatever might be the decision on the affairs of the Soudan, one thing at least was certain, that the defeat of Hicks Pasha had again adjourned the evacuation of Egypt itself, and had made a reduction of the army of occupation very difficult. 'Wood thinks it perfectly safe to evacuate Cairo, but absolutely fatal for the English troops to leave Alexandria,' Lord Granville had written in August to Mr. Gladstone.[1] Any such idea was now out of the question. But there was another and even more serious result of the disaster. By the defeat of Hicks Pasha the garrisons at Khartoum and in other fortified places in the Soudan were likely to become isolated amid the advancing hordes of a ferocious and

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 30, 1883.

fanatical barbarism. The British Government therefore decided to call on the Government of the Khédive to evacuate the country south of Wady Halfa, in regard to which and the expedition of Hicks Pasha they had themselves hitherto declined all responsibility. They also determined to send out General Gordon to direct the withdrawal of the threatened garrisons of Khartoum and the other Egyptian fortresses in the interior of the Soudan. The sea coast, however, from Suakim to Massowah, and the country inland as far as the White Nile, it was determined, consistently with the recommendation of Lord Dufferin, to continue to hold as Egyptian territory, in order to check the slave trade, which used these places as a *tête de pont* between Africa and Asia.

The defeat of Hicks Pasha marks an epoch; but the grave decisions in regard to Egypt which the Government had now to take suffered from the disadvantage of being discussed in the midst of disagreements on home questions, which at one moment seemed likely to break it up. If a crisis was averted, it was mainly through the tact and personal influence of Lord Granville with his colleagues, and his unwearied exertions to find a *modus vivendi* between them.

Early in the life of the Government it was proposed to introduce a Bill for the better representation of the people in Parliament, and with that object to assimilate the county with the borough franchise. The old question at once again arose, whether a Redistribution Bill was to form part of the Government proposals or not. In 1882, when some members of the Cabinet had apparently wished for the introduction of a Franchise Bill in the coming session, Lord Granville could see no object in taking a step which must result at an early date in the termination of the legislative activities of the existing Parliament with the large Liberal majority returned in 1880. This view at the time prevailed; but with the expiry of another year the argument for delay had lost some of its force.

Lord Hartington, having accepted the extension of household suffrage to the counties in England and Scotland,

hesitated as to the extension of it to Ireland, and wished that in any case it should be accompanied by a Bill for the Redistribution of Seats, and that the mistake of separating the two measures, which had proved fatal to every Reform Bill since 1832, including the measure of 1866, should not be repeated. The tactical argument against the separation of the two proposals was now stronger than ever, because the result of a complete assimilation of the franchise in town and county would make the contrast between the large county constituencies and the small boroughs so glaring as to verge upon the ridiculous. But Mr. Gladstone held a different view, and in December there was a crisis.

'Gladstone,' Lord Granville wrote to Sir William Harcourt, 'is working his prolific brain, but hitherto without success, for a solution.' The great question was: 'Will Hartington resign?' Could the Government remain in if he did? Would Mr. Gladstone himself desire to continue to carry on the Government? Would what Lord Granville described as the 'rumblings and grumblings' of Lord Hartington be the prelude to an earthquake, or would they not?[1]

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

WALMER CASTLE, *December* 23, 1883.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—I gather from some hurried notes from Gladstone, that he is most anxious to arrange matters, but that he considers it impossible to postpone the Franchise Bill till next year, to be introduced with redistribution.

'He has mentioned more than once that he has a right, if you force him to resign, to call upon you to form the Government with a pledge from him of support.

'I believe him to be ready to promise to attempt himself the solution of both branches of reform.

'I always believed this would be the practical result, but a pledge would be a great thing. 'Yours, G.'

Other circumstances embittered and aggravated the situation.

[1] Lord Granville to Sir W. Harcourt, December 17, 1883; to Lord Hartington, December 23, 1883; to Mr. Gladstone, December 10, 26, 1883; January 31, 1884.

'I have intimated to Hartington [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone] my regret at individual members of the Cabinet publicly announcing their opinions on matters which are to be discussed there.'

There was an evident danger of the doctrine of the collectivity of the Cabinet, and the joint and several responsibility of its members, being impaired, if now for the first time it was to be admitted that ministers were each to be free to put forward his own views at large public meetings and elsewhere.[1] Lord Granville told Lord Dufferin that he had been forcibly reminded of late of a saying that 'the French were better players at whist than the English, only they played their own game without thinking of what was in their partner's hand;' nor could he see how a member of the Cabinet had a right to volunteer arguments in favour of universal suffrage and other proposals not in the programme of the Cabinet, or could be said to be thereby advancing the more moderate proposals which were actually before it.[2]

'Your resignation [he wrote to Lord Hartington] at this moment would be received with applause in some quarters; but it appears to me to be an immense responsibility to break up the Government, to turn Gladstone prematurely out of office, and to destroy the cohesion of the Liberal party. The effect upon the position of the aristocracy and the richer classes, and the best interests of the country, may be very great.'

The results would, in fact, in every way, he pointed out, be most 'unconservative;' but 'do not think,' he added, 'because I did not gush during our conversation, that I am not fully alive to your difficulties.'[3]

The deadlock continued all through December. At last towards the end of the month a first but faint gleam of sunshine came from Hawarden; though it certainly was not,

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 10, 1883. As to the collectivity of the Cabinet see *Correspondence of Fox*, by Lord John Russell, iii. 88; Mr. Whitbread's speech on Lord Chatham's Memorial to the King about the Walcheren Expedition, *Hansard*, xvi. 4; and the reply of the Cabinet in 1825 to the King's letters on the Spanish Republics, Stapleton's *Life of Canning*, ii. 94, 95; Morley, *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 112–114.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, December 19, 1883.

[3] To Lord Hartington, December 7, 13, 1883.

Lord Granville admitted, 'as yet oppressively hot.'[1] *À l'impossible nul n'est tenu*, was the obvious reply which Lord Hartington could if he chose make to the threat that Mr. Gladstone would retire, and advise the Queen to call upon him to form a Ministry. That he would himself retire and throw on Lord Hartington the onus of being responsible for the break-up of the Government and the party, was Mr. Gladstone's equally obvious reply to Lord Hartington's wish to leave the ship; though Lord Granville, with his usual cheery outlook on affairs, said he would be in favour of making the attempt to go on notwithstanding, however much he might deplore the cause.[2] Each player in fact had a strong card which in the last resort he might try to play. Eventually it was agreed to extend household suffrage to Ireland, and for the moment to separate the Franchise Bill from the Redistribution Bill, but on condition that the latter should follow the passage of the former as rapidly as the exigencies of the parliamentary situation permitted, and if possible be passed into law before a general election on the extended franchise could take place. Fortified with the assurances that unanimity had, though with difficulty, been restored among his colleagues, Mr. Gladstone again returned to the Riviera for part of the winter of 1883–84.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *January* 31, 1884.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—All the Cabinet (excepting the Chancellor, and I have no reason to doubt his being of the same opinion) have informed me of their wish that you should allow yourself to be guided by the best medical opinion as to your further stay in the South of France. Several of them have done this separately and spontaneously. Those who see in the strongest light the difficulty of the position in your absence, are as strong as the others in holding that your health is the first object, and that you ought to be guided by medical opinion. I know that Clark wishes you to remain over Easter.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 21, 1883.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, December 26, 1883.

'The Queen is very strong in her opinion and her wish that you should have the full benefit of rest till Easter.

'Nothing can be more friendly than her solicitude on this matter.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

As soon as Parliament met, it rained attacks and votes of censure. The leaders of the Opposition allowed the free lances of their party to blame the Government for not supporting the hold of the Egyptian Government on the whole of the vast and but little known region vaguely described as the Soudan, but were careful to avoid giving any pledge that their own policy would be different if they had themselves to assume the responsibilities of office. A great cry also went up from a portion of the London press in favour of the proclamation of a British Protectorate of Egypt.

'The growing faith of our press in a British Protectorate of Egypt [Lord Ampthill wrote] is astounding to me, when I remember the scorn and suspicion with which Bismarck's wish that we should take Egypt was received in England but a short time ago. Taking Egypt would be giving a bad example to the Powers, who look upon themselves as the Sultan's heirs, and those Powers would "jump for joy" if England took Egypt; but our press does not seem to take those consequences into consideration, when it clamours for a departure from the declared policy of her Majesty's Government. On the other hand, I apprehend it would be as difficult for us to get out of Egypt as it was for France to get out of Rome from 1849 to 1870.'[1]

Lord Salisbury argued that the Government had adopted three distinct and inconsistent policies. They had first, he asserted, accepted the Soudan as an integral part of the Egyptian possessions. This, he said, was a sound policy at the time, and he attributed it to the presence in Egypt of Lord Dufferin, who in the early winter had gone thither from Constantinople on a special mission. On the return of Lord Dufferin to Turkey, the Government, he asserted, had relapsed into a policy of Epicurean indifference. Lastly, at the beginning of the year, they had reversed what had been their original policy, by ordering the evacuation of the country

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, February 9, 1884.

south of Wady Halfa. This, he said, was a cowardly course. Lord Granville's conclusive answer was that the Government had never at any time assumed responsibility for the affairs of the Soudan, and that the circumstances had entirely altered since the defeat of Hicks Pasha. To accuse the Government of not having foreseen the appearance and the overwhelming victory of the Mahdi, was a criticism about as reasonable as to accuse the Government of ignorance because they might have been unable to indicate the exact course of the next Atlantic storm. Meanwhile other critics were arguing, and with greater point, that the operations in the Soudan ought to have been prohibited *ab initio*. But this criticism was made after the event, and it was the exact opposite of Lord Salisbury's main contention. The cry was also loud that the garrisons in the Soudan were being deserted. The reply was that the statement was contrary to fact, because every effort was being made to withdraw them in safety, by the mission of General Gordon to the Soudan.[1]

Notwithstanding the severe criticisms passed on the Government in these respects, Lord Granville was able in the debate on the Address in 1884 to point with unanswerable force to the undoubted fact that the good effects of British control in Egypt were already visible. 'What we have done,' he said, 'is to choose the very best men for the purpose. Having done this, the right principle to pursue is to lay down sound principles by which they are to act, and as long as we have confidence in them, to give them our most ample support.' When the task had been accomplished, and the financial situation had been regulated, it might be time to think about the reconquest of the Soudan, but certainly not until then; for at present an aggressive policy in the Soudan would spell financial ruin. There were also broader considerations. The more experienced members of the Opposition could not fail to recognise that it was right not to precipitate a crisis with foreign Powers, by announcing the permanence of the British occupation of Egypt, or to provoke a crisis similar to that of 1882 by leaving Egypt to

[1] *Hansard*, cclxxxiv. 28–37.

shift for itself. However easy it might be to gibe at the cowardice of the Foreign Office, they knew that they would not themselves under the circumstances pursue any different course if called into power. The British Government did not mean to annex or to permanently occupy Egypt; but they could only repeat what they had said the year before, that 'it would be an act of treachery to Europe, as well as to Egypt, to withdraw the British troops before there was a reasonable prospect of a stable and useful government being established in that country.' Such were the arguments which, in the debate on the first of a series of votes of censure moved in the session of 1884, Lord Granville placed before the House of Lords, and which were employed again and again during the session in both Houses of Parliament in reply to attacks which lacked variety: attacks, in Mr. Gladstone's words, animated quite as much by a desire to embarrass and injure the Government at home, as to vindicate the position of Great Britain abroad.[1] 'The noble Marquess,' Lord Granville said on one of these numerous occasions, in reply to Lord Salisbury,

'has accused her Majesty's Government of vacillation in regard to their policy in Egypt. He has done this in almost every speech he has made in the country. The noble Marquess is cunning of fence. Those who have had the honour of crossing swords with him know it well; but I cannot help thinking that he belongs to that class of swordsmen who are somewhat neglectful of self-defence, and who do not mind how any particular thrust has been repeatedly met and parried, but trust to their strength and will go on lunging at their adversary as before. The noble Marquess has repeated arguments against us which we have constantly met, and which are certainly perfectly inconsistent with the arguments which he addressed to us two years ago. But one thing he has not done. He has not defended himself from certain charges which have been made against him. There was a speech made some little time ago by a member of Parliament—not a member of her Majesty's Government, but a man whom nobody accuses of being strongly influenced by party spirit—a man who knows, perhaps, better than almost anyone in this country the Egyptian side of the Eastern question—I mean Mr. Goschen. Mr. Goschen closely argued and logically proved that, taking one

[1] *Hansard*, cclxxxiv. 597; cclxxxv. 623; cclxxxvi. 1541.

diplomatic step after another by the noble Marquess, the noble Marquess was, of all persons in this kingdom, the most responsible for the difficulties which have occurred in Egypt. The noble Marquess has not thought it necessary for his own character to give the slightest answer to a speech which certainly has some weight with those who think on the subject. My Lords, the noble Marquess has spoken of our conduct in Egypt as being vacillating. I do not understand how it vacillates. It is just as vacillating as that of a man who, carrying an umbrella, puts that umbrella up when it rains, takes it down when it is fine, and unfolds it again when the drops begin to fall anew. The noble Marquess says that he is in ignorance of our policy. Our policy has been often described. I might go further back, but I will not go beyond last year. I will take the instructions sent to Lord Dufferin. "Her Majesty's Government, while desirous that the British occupation should last as short a time as possible, feel bound not to withdraw from the task thus imposed upon them until the administration of affairs has been reconstructed on a basis which will afford satisfactory guarantees for the maintenance of peace, order, and prosperity in Egypt, and the stability of the Khédive's authority, for the judicial development of self-government, and for the fulfilment of our obligations towards foreign Powers." My Lords, on the part of her Majesty's Government, I wrote an important document stating our policy to the European Powers, and in that document I used nearly exactly the same words as I had addressed to Lord Dufferin. Our object of preserving peace and order in Egypt has been happily accomplished, and although for the present the British force remains in Egypt for the preservation of public tranquillity, her Majesty's Government are desirous of withdrawing it as soon as the condition of the country and the organisation of the measures for preserving the Khédive's authority will admit of it. But meanwhile the position in which her Majesty's Government are placed imposes upon them the duty of giving advice, with the object of securing that the order of things to be established shall be of a satisfactory character, and possess the elements of stability. My Lords, in the debate on the Address, in reply to the Queen's Speech last year, the noble Marquess asked me in a very pointed manner to specify a date for the withdrawal of the troops in Egypt, and my answer was to the effect that it would not be prudent for me to fix a precise date, but that we should not keep our troops there longer than was necessary for the purpose of securing the tranquillity of that country. My Lords, these things show what our footing was. We did not wish permanently to occupy Egypt with an armed force, but while that armed force was there we did

insist, and we thought it our duty to ourselves, to Europe, and to Egypt, to insist, that our advice should be followed in all important matters connected with Egypt proper, and to that we have adhered down to the present moment. My Lords, I have had occasion to assure the Egyptian Government quite recently of our determination to support it in its efforts to secure stability in that country. We feel bound to defend Egypt proper, and to assist in defending Egypt proper on the Red Sea, and in obtaining security and tranquillity in Egypt. We are told that our policy has led to utter confusion and anarchy in Egypt. The noble Marquess jumbles up Egypt proper and the Soudan. I can only say that I got a private letter a few weeks after Sir E. Baring arrived in Cairo, and he told me he found the action of the Government in every respect superior to what it was when he was last in the Control. My Lords, a colleague of mine in the Government, addressing his constituents the other day, told them that he had passed two months in Egypt, and that his belief was that it was safer to walk out at any time of the day or night in Egypt proper than it was to go from Euston Square to Waterloo Station in this great and civilised metropolis.'[1]

If the Alexandria indemnities were to be settled, and the expenses incurred during the rebellion and the war in the Soudan were to be paid, it was necessary for the Egyptian Government to raise a public loan. It was even more necessary to adjust the distribution of the Egyptian revenue between the existing bondholders and the Government, for while the Government had to face an annual deficit—it amounted to 1,600,000*l.* in 1883—the revenues assigned under the Law of Liquidation to the service of the debt showed a large surplus, which under that law had to be devoted to the reduction of the capital of the debt. Thus, while the Egyptian Government was paying off loans at a comparatively low rate of interest with one hand, it was borrowing on current account at a very high rate with the other, being compelled to repeat, however unwillingly, the errors which had distinguished the old Sinking Funds of the early part of the century in England. The obvious policy of the Egyptian Government was to seek to raise a new loan, and to obtain power to apply some portion of the surplus of the assigned revenues to the use of the Government, either

[1] *Hansard* cclxxxiv. 30.

in order to pay the interest and capital on the new loan, or to help to meet the ordinary expenditure. But in order to do this a modification of the Law of Liquidation was necessary; and in order to modify the Law of Liquidation, the consent of the Powers, who were practically parties to that instrument, was necessary. The Egyptian Government also argued, with the support of Great Britain, that a reduction of the rate of interest on the old loans would be now legitimate under all the circumstances of the case owing to the improvement in the future prospects of the country, as well as necessary owing to the temporary necessities of the Government. Lord Granville therefore proposed that a Conference should assemble to try to agree upon a method of enabling the Egyptian Government to fulfil the engagements which it had contracted, and also to restore the financial equilibrium.

Immediately the intention of summoning a Conference became known, the apprehension was adroitly suggested in England that the situation was about to be used by France in order to impose political concessions of an injurious character as the condition of assent to a settlement, and that an entire betrayal of British interests was contemplated by the Government. This suspicion was actively stimulated by portions of the press which professed to have special information; and again the cry was heard, loud, persistent, and well organised, that a Government which hesitated to take Egypt and brush France out of the road was a pusillanimous Government, while the constant repetition of these accusations led to the belief in their truth being widely entertained in many quarters.

'The press [Lord Ampthill told Lord Granville] has much to answer for in regard to the wrong impressions about our Egyptian policy which they have popularised on the Continent. . . . It has gradually become unpopular in Germany, thanks to the *Times*, the *Pall Mall*, and the English papers from which German journalists take their inspiration; and I greatly fear that our new Conference circular will not find much favour in German public opinion. . . .

'I often wonder whether the editors of Liberal papers are aware

of the harm they do to their own cause abroad in not supporting their own Liberal Government in difficult, delicate, or dangerous questions. Liberals abroad are always more inclined to believe in the newspapers than in Blue Books.' [1]

Notwithstanding the war to the knife carried on at this time in the House of Commons and the press against the Government, it was for the moment found possible to steer clear of the rocks, and a Conference to deal with the financial situation assembled in London. In a series of despatches which Lord Granville and M. Waddington exchanged before it met, preliminary assurances were given as to the conditions which both Governments would observe. The French Government disclaimed any desire either to restore the former financial *condominium* embodied in the Dual Control, or to substitute a French for an English garrison in the event of a withdrawal by England from Egypt. It also expressed confidence that the solemn declarations were genuine which had already been given by the British Government to abide by the Conventions and Firmans on which the international situation in Egypt depended. This statement Lord Granville in return accepted as an approval and recognition of the position adopted by him in the despatch of January 3, 1883; and he then proposed that evacuation should take place in January 1888 if the Powers were then 'of opinion that such withdrawal could take place without risk to peace or order.' The British Government further proposed to prepare plans for dealing with the Suez Canal and for the neutralisation of Egypt, to be brought into operation whenever the evacuation took place.

The publication of the papers containing the despatches of M. Waddington and Lord Granville restored confidence, and, on the assurances just described, France consented to enter the Conference, which was expressly limited to the discussion of the financial situation only. But when the attack had been silenced in England, it began in France, where M. Waddington had powerful enemies. It soon appeared that the preliminary assurances given by Lord

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, April 24, June 7, 1884.

Granville in the despatches which had passed, received a far wider interpretation in the mind of M. Ferry—who had become the object of violent attacks in the French Chambers for having, it was declared, surrendered too much to Great Britain—than those assurances had in the mind of M. Waddington himself, and had opened up a fresh arena of controversy rather than closed an old field of difference.[1] When the Conference at length met, differences also at once began on the financial questions themselves. It was the evident desire of the French Government to give an enlarged sphere of duty to the Commissioners of the Caisse, and thus to restore the financial *condominium* under a new disguise. They also opposed every proposal for the reduction of the rate of interest, and especially objected to the idea of a British guarantee of the debt so as to permit the reduction of the rate. Lord Hartington at this juncture made a visit to Paris. Thence he wrote to Lord Granville.

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

PARIS, *June* 3, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—Lord Lyons' two principal ideas on the negotiations seem to be: 1. That the only result which matters very much, and which would seriously disturb the relations between the two countries, would be that the arrangement should be concluded between the two Governments and be rejected by the House of Commons. He does not say that this would lead to war; but it would certainly greatly increase the irritation against England, and would probably lead to some offensive act on the part of France which we should find it difficult to tolerate. He asked whether the negotiation could not be broken off rather than risk such a result; and said that for the Government to risk defeat on such an issue would be an "unpatriotic" act.

'2. He thinks that the French do not intend to support our financial proposals, and that they are now engaged in the preparation of an opposition Budget to that of Childers. They have got M. de Blignières hard at work, and will endeavour to prove that but for the expenses of our occupation, which nobody wants, Egypt would be solvent and the bondholders need not be called on for any sacrifices.

[1] Rambaud, *Jules Ferry*, p. 268.

'I suppose they will be joined in this by the other Powers, and if the Conference is abortive in financial results after all the concessions we have made to get into it, how shall we look then? (This is my observation, not Lord Lyons'.)

'I regret to say that he does not attach so much importance as we do to the French declarations. He admits that they are something, but says he supposes it would be cynical to suggest that they may not be worth very much when the time arrives.

'He does not think that they will have much difficulty in defending them in the Chamber. The great desire here is to turn *us* out of Egypt; and if M. Ferry can show that he has succeeded in doing this in two or three years' time, he will have had a triumph.

'Yours, HARTINGTON.'

LORD LYONS TO LORD GRANVILLE.

PARIS, *June* 3, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I sent Lord Hartington your letter yesterday morning, and I had a long visit from him in the afternoon.

'As matters stand, what seems to be most to be dreaded with a view to our relations with France is a vote of the House of Commons censuring an arrangement made by her Majesty's Government with the French Government. Such a vote, and the debate by which it would be preceded, would, I cannot but fear, have a truly lamentable effect.

'I understand that Jules Ferry is having a memorandum on the finances of Egypt drawn up by Blignières, and that it will dispute the accuracy of Mr. Childers' information, and represent that the finances were in a flourishing condition, and that there were surpluses even during Arabi's rebellion, up to the time at which England took the thing in hand. The memorandum will probably deny there being any necessity for reducing the interest of the debt if the finances be properly managed.

'I do not know whether such a reason will be assigned to us, but in fact it seems that the French object to any large loan being guaranteed by England, on account of the lien, so to speak, which it would give England upon Egypt. The French would prefer a simple fresh issue of Unified Stock.

'In the meantime the French bondholders are bestirring themselves, and protesting against any arrangement being made without their being consulted.

'Jules Ferry, however, himself thinks little of any other consideration in comparison with the political success which it would be to him to give France again a political footing in Egypt; and as a means

to this, to get a time fixed for the departure of our troops. I do not think he is afraid of much disapproval here of his counter-concession, the engagement that French troops shall not enter Egypt either on the departure of the English troops or afterwards. Unless the engagement were very formally made and very peculiarly and stringently worded, it would be felt here that it did not amount to much; for though it would preclude the occupation of Egypt by the French to preserve order and promote reforms in the same way we occupy the country now, it would not be interpreted here as preventing France using force to avenge an insult or protect distinct French interests, in cases which would constitute *casus belli* as regarded any ordinary country.

'I do not quite understand the exact position in which stands the suggestion that the financial questions should be first settled by England with the several Powers separately, and then a Conference be held for a day or two only to ratify what had been already settled. Does this afford an opening for purely financial negotiations, and admit of dropping the French political proposals, which appear to be so unpopular in England? I believe Jules Ferry is in some tribulation about the difficulties his proposals have met with in England, and is half inclined to be sorry he had made them so strong, though I doubt whether Waddington has made him fully aware of the violence of the opposition they encounter in England.

'Generally speaking, I am very unhappy about the growing ill-will between France and England which exists on both sides of the Channel. It is not that I suppose that France has any deliberate intention of going to war with us. But the two nations come into contact in every part of the globe. In every part of it questions arise which, in the present state of feeling, excite mutual suspicion and irritation. Who can say when and where, in this state of things, some local events may not produce a serious quarrel, or some high-handed proceedings of hot-headed officials occasion an actual collision?

'Yours sincerely,

'Lyons.'

Notwithstanding all the efforts of Lord Granville and Lord Lyons, it was found impossible to come to an agreement on the financial points on which Mr. Childers and M. de Blignières took different views. M. Waddington's own position also was impaired by the want of confidence between himself and M. Ferry, and the persistent attacks made on him at home.

A final but ineffectual effort at a compromise was attempted in the last days of May.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *June* 1, 1884.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—Lyons will show you the full records of what passed between Waddington and me.

'You will see that I wrote strictly according to the Cabinet orders.

'The reopening the question of the limited increase of power to the Caisse during our occupancy, advised by Baring, sanctioned by the Cabinet, offered by me, and agreed to by the French Government, was mercly a forlorn hope. But I understood the Cabinet to decide that the reduction of $1\frac{1}{2}$ year from the original period named of five years was to be given, though conditionally with the Presidency of the Caisse.

'If the latter is refused finally by the French, you and we are quite at liberty to refuse the reduction. This would require a Cabinet. In a letter which Baring has written to me about the five years, he does not seem to have seized the point that it will require *all Europe* to force us out in 1888.

'As to the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. reduction of interest, I am not a Chancellor of the Exchequer *in esse* or *posse*, and I have personally taken no part in the financial proposals. In our conversations with Waddington, Childers has always written and spokcn the proposals. I do not think we are bound to the $\frac{1}{2}$ per cent. by having privately informed the French of the idea, particularly as they have declined discussing it separately. We might alter it if the statement of the Budget required it.

'But the mention of it has of course weakened our hand.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

To crown all these difficulties, a fresh cause of difference was suddenly introduced at the Conference by the German Plenipotentiaries, who sought to bring forward the thorny question of the sanitary regulations in the Canal, though the deliberations of the Conference had been expressly limited to finance. The result was that the Conference after seven sittings broke up on August 2 without arriving at any decision. In the last sittings a sharp passage of arms took place between the German Ambassador and Lord Granville in regard to

a renewed attempt to introduce the sanitary question. M. Waddington also attempted to revive the financial discussion after it had been declared at an end, whereupon Lord Granville abruptly left the chair at once, so as to render further discussion impossible. Thus 'amid unusual and it may be said dramatic incidents' the curtain fell on the first international attempt to regulate the finances of Egypt.[1]

It was now resolved to send Lord Northbrook, a former Governor-General of India, and a minister of Cabinet rank —he was at the time First Lord of the Admiralty—to report on the situation in Egypt, with a view to another attempt at a settlement in the coming year.

'Gladstone [Lord Granville wrote to him just before his departure] greatly doubts whether Parliament would or should assume new responsibilities for Egyptian finance, and take an equivalent full financial control; and thinks that such control is a certain though circuitous path towards annexation, and has been the root of the present mischief and embarrassment. I think he hardly realises the difficulty of doing illegal things in the face of Europe.'[2]

With this rather discouraging warning Lord Northbrook started for Egypt. On his advice the Egyptian Government decided to 'burst its fetters,' and in September 1884 it effected what might be termed a sort of financial *coup d'état*, and appropriated to the purposes of meeting the deficit on the ordinary revenue account, a portion of the surplus of the sums hitherto appropriated under the Law of Liquidation to the payment of debt.[3] Financially the proposal was sound; legally it turned out to be incorrect. The Powers intervened; and the portion of the assigned revenues which had been abstracted had to be restored to the Sinking Fund. Finally proceedings were taken in which the Egyptian Government was made a defendant in an action before the Mixed Tribunals, and the decision of the Court was adverse to what had been done. The financial position thus became complicated by legal difficulties. By the time also that Lord Northbrook

[1] *Annual Register* for 1884, p. 85.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Northbrook, September 12, 1884. Milner, *Egypt*, p. 94.

with a full report on the financial situation was returning to England, the cordial relations which at the cost of such great efforts had been established with Germany were suddenly interrupted, and the closing scenes of the Conference on the Finances of Egypt were found to have been the herald of still more serious troubles which had arisen in another part of Africa.

# CHAPTER X

## WEST AFRICA

## 1883–1884

AFTER the events of 1870 a considerable party had grown up in Germany which desired to see a German colonial empire and a German colonial policy. It enjoyed the patronage of the Crown Prince, but was steadily discouraged by the Chancellor. Lord Granville did not feel 'the slightest jealousy of the Germans acquiring colonial possessions,' and had told Lord Odo Russell that he 'did not share the desires of those who wished Great Britain to acquire Fiji, Arabia, all Western Africa, &c.' Nothing seemed more improbable than that any substantial difference of opinion should arise on these questions between Great Britain and Germany.[1] 'No colonies,' Prince Bismarck had emphatically said in 1873; and he told Lord Odo Russell 'that he desired neither them nor fleets.'

> 'Colonies, in his opinion, would only be a cause of weakness, because colonies could only be defended by powerful fleets, and Germany's geographical position did not necessitate her development into a first-class maritime power. . . . Many colonies had been offered him—he had rejected them, and wished only for coaling stations acquired by treaty from other nations.'[2]

Ten years afterwards, although the colonial party was still ridiculed by Prince Bismarck, it had gained influence, and occupied a very different position from that in which it stood at the time of the Treaty of Frankfurt, when the aspirations of the Hanse Towns, as Admiral Livonius told

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, November 27, 1873.

[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, February 11, 1873.

M. Jules Ferry, for colonial acquisitions at the expense of France, were at once stiffly dismissed.[1] In 1883 it had obtained the ear of a certain section of public opinion, and was likely to become a force in the Reichsrath, in which case the Ambassador thought that Prince Bismarck might yet have to count with it. In any case the situation required watching. 'I venture to call your special attention,' he wrote in 1883, 'to my despatch of May 9 about German claims in the Fiji Islands'—these islands in the interval had been annexed by Great Britain.

'Bismarck is said to feel strongly in the matter, and to intend to press those claims steadily, so as to show Germany that he can protect German interests all over the world. It might save future trouble if they could be dealt with gracefully and speedily, so as to leave him no time to get up an agitation about them.'[2]

A correspondence ensued, and the final reply which Lord Granville sent on July 23 of that year seemed to Lord Ampthill so satisfactory, that he hoped it had ended the matter. Great, therefore, was his disappointment when soon afterwards the German Foreign Office was found demanding the appointment of a mixed Commission; not that Prince Bismarck

'expected that such a Commission would reverse the verdict of so impartial a tribunal as that which had dealt with the claims, but he wished for a mixed tribunal as a means to calm down the angry feelings public opinion would give way to, if Germans were not permitted to investigate these claims in concert with the English and Colonial authorities.'

Count Hatzfeld had gone on to explain that the attitude assumed by the Australian authorities in regard to the annexation of the unoccupied portions of New Guinea and the neighbouring islands was stirring up the 'envy and cupidity' of the German colonial party, and that Prince Bismarck, while determined to oppose and combat their growing influence, wished, on the other hand, to show that,

[1] Rambaud, *Jules Ferry*, ch. xxvii. p. 394.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, May 9, 1883.

through the friendly relations which he had sought to establish with England, he could obtain from the British Government the most impartial attention to his wishes.

'I conclude [Lord Ampthill said], from this very earnest appeal, that Prince Bismarck's interest is increased by the prospect of a general election this autumn, in which the Opposition may raise the popular cry of "Colonies for Germany" on the hustings, which might tend to diminish the number of his supporters. Be that as it may, if you cannot give him the mixed Commission, we must make up our minds to a phase of ill humour on the part of the great Chancellor, whose sensitiveness has become proverbial.'[1]

The difficulty, as Lord Ampthill had himself explained very fully to Prince Bismarck, in accepting the German demands in regard to Fiji, was that a proposal to reopen a *res judicata* in a matter wherein the German Foreign Office itself acknowledged that the original tribunal had been fair and impartial, was a hard nut for the British Government to crack. In April 1884 the Chancellor returned to the charge.

'Germany's financial interests in the Caisse [he told Lord Ampthill in April] did not exceed a miserable million of marks, and German shipping in the Canal was below the mark; so that conflicting commercial interests between England and Germany were happily not to be apprehended in Egypt, as for instance in the Congo, the West Coast, or Fiji, where German claims stood in need of the equitable consideration of her Majesty's Government.'[2]

In this connection he complained to Lord Ampthill of the prevalence of 'a less equitable spirit in our colonial authorities as compared with the Home authorities.' The Ambassador once more noticed with apprehension the exaggerated importance which the Chancellor seemed to attach to the Fiji claims.[3]

In July 1883 information had arrived at the Foreign Office that a French vessel had been into the Kwa-Kwa and Malemba rivers on the West Coast of Africa, and that the

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, March 15, 1884.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, April 10, 1884.
[3] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, April 24, 1884.

native chiefs were being persuaded into signing treaties with the French Government. Any extension of French territory in those regions was considered by the Colonial Office to be dangerous to British interests, as the French colonial tariff had been revised in a sense hostile to British trade; and had already been applied in the Gaboon. Fearing that further annexations were intended, the Colonial Office decided before the end of 1883 to place the Oil Rivers, together with Ambas Bay, where a Baptist Mission had existed for some years, under formal British protection. But while Mr. Hewitt, the resident Consul on the Gold Coast, who was in England partly to recruit his own impaired health, but partly also to consult with the Government, was making preparations for a return to his post, a communication arrived at the Foreign Office from the German Embassy, which it may be desirable to quote in its material passages.

'I have the honour to state to your Lordship that the Imperial Consul-General, Dr. Nachtigal, has been commissioned by my Government to visit the West Coast of Africa in the course of the next few months, in order to complete the information now in the possession of the Foreign Office at Berlin on the state of German commerce on that coast. With this object, Dr. Nachtigal will shortly embark at Lisbon on board the gunboat Möwe. He will put himself into communication with the authorities in the English possessions on the said coast, and is authorised to conduct, on behalf of the Imperial Government, negotiations connected with certain questions. I venture, in accordance with my instructions, to beg your Excellency to be so good as to cause the authorities in the British possessions in West Africa to be furnished with suitable recommendations.'[1]

Further assurances having been given verbally, that Dr. Nachtigal's objects were only scientific so far as they were not commercial, Lord Granville—anxious above all things to maintain a good understanding with Germany—gave the assurance which had been asked, that the British authorities on the spot should render all possible assistance to him. On arriving, however, Dr. Nachtigal quickly proceeded to make

[1] April 20, 1884. The full text will be found printed in *The Partition of Africa*, by Mr. J. S. Keltie, pp. 200, 201.

a series of annexations in Togo Land and eastwards, until he reached the French settlements beyond the Rio Campo. Meanwhile Consul Hewitt had arrived off Lagos. His journey had been delayed at the last moment by the perseverance of the officials of the British Treasury in delaying to provide the funds to enable him to carry out the objects of his journey, and it was not until a private inquiry had been addressed by Lord Granville to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, whether the country was being governed by the Cabinet or by the clerks at the Treasury, that these difficulties were at length surmounted. Much valuable time had, however, been lost in the interval. Nevertheless Consul Hewitt arrived in time to secure the Oil Rivers and the mouths of the Niger—the real commercial key of the situation in that region—and the coast westward from the Rio del Rey to the boundary of Lagos. It was to these regions that Lord Granvillle looked for an extension of territory and commerce, far more than in the south of the African continent. The intention was to hand over the administration of a large part of the Niger territories to a Chartered Company, constituted on the same lines as the Borneo Company, to which in 1881 a charter had been granted.

Upon these events becoming known in Germany, a great outcry was raised by the Colonial party that German interests were not being adequately supported by the Government. An election was approaching; and threats began to be used that the support of the 'Kolonial-Menschen' in the German Parliament might be refused, if the Chancellor did not give a stronger support to the ambitions of his countrymen beyond the seas on the West Coast of Africa, and in the Melanesian seas, where public opinion in the Australian colonies was pressing that the whole of New Guinea and the neighbouring islands, except the existing Dutch settlements, should be declared British territory.

At the time of these events another conflict between Great Britain and France had arisen amid the ruins of the ancient African Empire once possessed by Portugal. The former greatness of Portugal had been sapped and

finally destroyed by the effects on the energies of the nation of a restrictive commercial policy and the reign of religious terror of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Of her once vast possessions over sea there remained nothing but a few real and a far greater number of shadowy claims on the coast, and to them Portugal clung with the tenacity always shown in regard to the memories of former glory by nations which have fallen from their high estate. To these claims, however, a new importance—and one of a more practical kind—had of late years begun to attach, owing to the opening up of the interior of the African continent and the prospect of still further discoveries. It had suddenly dawned on the world that the gigantic stream which poured itself into the sea near Boma was the same great river which explorers had seen in the far interior of the continent. It was then quickly realised that the Congo basin was only separated by a comparatively narrow parting from the waters which feed the Nile and those which flow into the Eastern Ocean—that it represented in fact the drainage of a vast continent, and that whoever was master of the river was master also of the centre of Africa. To this region Portugal was a claimant, but not the only claimant. France, represesented by an enterprising explorer, M. de Brazza, coming from the north, was desirous of establishing her predominance on the river, while a body styled the International African Association, and depending on the wealth and organised by the energy of the King of the Belgians, was attempting a similar undertaking with objects which at first were described as commercial only The King had wisely secured the services of Mr. Stanley, whose recent exploits in Africa had fascinated the public mind in England.

From time to time attempts had been made by the successive occupants of the Foreign Office to define the limits of the Portuguese possessions by agreement, but these negotiations had proved ineffectual. Near the mouth of the Congo, factories, mostly Dutch, carried on whatever trade existed; but they owed no allegiance to any flag, and the civilised world was frequently shocked by tales of lawless

cruelty, recalling the worst days of the Slave Trade which had formerly desolated those regions and had turned large tracts of land near the mouth of the Congo into an uninhabited desert. Civilisation was represented only by a few Baptist stations on the lower reaches of the river; otherwise, the whole country seemed given up to be a prey to violence. The law of God was unknown: that of man was unrecognised. By recent legislation, known as the Foreign Jurisdiction Acts, some slight hold had been obtained on British subjects committing crime in unoccupied regions, should they once return within the jurisdiction of the English courts. The citizens of other European nations enjoyed an unlicensed impunity from all restraint, and were not slow to profit thereby.

It was certain that if France obtained the control of the Congo, the tariffs destructive to British trade which she was introducing in all her colonial possessions would immediately be enforced on the river. Foreseeing these risks, Sir Robert Morier had suggested that the region of the Congo should form a leading chapter in a large settlement of African affairs which he had proposed to the British Government during the Administration of Lord Beaconsfield, and intended by him to include all outstanding questions with Portugal, whether in Africa, India, or elsewhere. According to this scheme Great Britain was to recognise the claims of Portugal northwards from Ambriz to the southern bank of the Congo, while the northern bank was to become British. The river itself was to be placed under some form of international control, consisting in the first instance of the representatives of the Riverain States, to which, as time and occasion required, the representatives of other Powers might be admitted on the model of the Danube Commission. Lord Beaconsfield seems to have taken little interest in the wide plans of the great British diplomatist, and when Consul Lieutenant Cameron in 1875 issued a proclamation on his own initiative, taking possession of the basin of the Congo, his action was not recognised by Lord Carnarvon.[1]

[1] Lieutenant Cameron, Loanda, November 29, 1875, to the Earl of Derby.

Lord Granville took the view that the interests of Great Britain in the Congo were commercial only, and that in a region where he had hitherto advanced no territorial claims he would stand in a stronger position in the proposed negotiations if he made none now. The final settlement of the questions connected with the Lower Niger and the Oil Rivers was certain to lead to some extension of territory and to a considerable increase in the number of British protectorates, and any proposal to complicate these negotiations with a further proposal to claim the north bank of the Congo for England would, he knew, meet with certain refusal from the Cabinet.

'I am not a good judge [Mr. Gladstone wrote at this time] of the necessity of a Commission in the Congo case; but if a Commission be needful or desirable, I should be disposed to yield to the Portuguese proposal, still with the intention of appropriating no exclusive advantage.'[1]

Under these circumstances, it was decided, in order to exclude the hostile tariffs of France from the Congo, to recognise the sovereignty of Portugal on both banks of the river up to a certain limit inland; and to draw an interior line which, without expressly limiting Portuguese sovereignty for ever in those regions, would put an end to the indefinite extension of her ancient claims; leaving the interior to be dealt with by conventions from time to time, in the manner which has since taken place under the treaties—mostly the work of Lord Salisbury—which have been concluded in order to deal with the successive results of the gradual opening-up of the African continent. The river it was proposed to declare free and open to the trade of the world, and to place it under an Anglo-Portuguese Navigation Commission, to which the accession of the Great Powers would be welcome, as Lord Granville informed the Ambassadors almost simultaneously with the signature of the treaty with Portugal. By other clauses of this treaty, stringent stipulations were made for low tariffs in the new Portuguese territories; for the

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 8, 1883.

protection of the rights of the missionaries, both in regard to property and freedom of religious teaching, in all the Portuguese possessions; and for the security of the rights of the native chiefs on the coast under their treaties with the British Government. On the eastern coast of Africa the freedom of the navigation of the Zambesi was stipulated for; and the claims of Portugal on the Shiré were drawn at the confluence of that river and the Ruo, and were made to depend on effective occupation. Such were the main provisions of this much-debated instrument which, for nearly two years, was discussed between the Governments of Great Britain and Portugal. But the treaty, already denounced beforehand in many quarters, met with violent opposition directly it was signed. Some commercial houses resented the termination of the state of affairs in which their agents had been allowed without question to do that which was right in the sight of their own eyes. Others dreaded the interference of Portuguese officials, notwithstanding all the clauses introduced into the treaty for the protection of British trade. The missionaries on the West Coast feared that the hostility of a Roman Catholic Power might ultimately prove fatal to their labours, and were not consoled by the arrangements on the East Coast, the excellence of which they did not deny. At Lisbon, on the other hand, a wild outburst of fury denounced the treaty as a practical surrender to Great Britain of the most undoubted rights of Portugal; and while the Secretary for Foreign Affairs was attacked in London for having betrayed every British interest, the Portuguese Minister in London, M. d'Antas, was accused in Lisbon of having been cajoled into a base compromise in regard to the essential rights of his country, and a clamour arose for his instant recall.

There were some and not unimportant exceptions to this outbreak of hostility. If a majority at a meeting of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce condemned the treaty, some of the leading members dissented from the conclusion, and Mr. Harry Johnston, then first stepping into fame, came forward in defence of the settlement which had been made.

But these voices were few and far between, and were those of the rare persons who paused to ask what would happen were the treaty abandoned. Nor was it long before the French Government, encouraged by the clamour in England, announced their refusal to recognise the arrangement.

If the political horizon had at this time been otherwise clear, it might have been no difficult task to carry through the treaty. Discussion in the House of Commons could only have strengthened the case of the Government against the purely commercial opposition. No European Power except Portugal even claimed to be a riverain state on the Congo. Whatever indirect rights any of them might possess had been fully recognised by the offer to allow them a seat on the Navigation Commission, and by the limitation imposed on the Portuguese claims in the interior. But the political horizon was not clear. At this very moment Egyptian affairs had reached a dangerous stage; and on the same line of coast as the Congo, far away to the south, other events had been taking place which by a strange succession of misunderstandings brought Germany into the field as an active competitor with Great Britain for colonial supremacy, and made her the ally of France in opposition to Great Britain before the year 1884 was over. A barren tract north of the Orange River, hardly known hitherto to any but professional geographers, was to obtain a page of history to itself, and the forgotten harbour and exhausted guano deposits of Angra Pequena suddenly leapt into an unexpected fame.

In 1842 a German Rhenish mission had established a station at Bethany in the interior of Namaqualand. Walfisch Bay, vaguely regarded as a British possession, and the only accessible harbour on the long line of unoccupied coast extending from the Orange River to the southern limit of the Portuguese possessions, was the point where the trade which in time the German missionaries had developed gained access to the sea. In 1868, in consequence of troubles between the missionaries and the natives, communications took place between the British and the Prussian Governments. They resulted in England expressing herself ready to extend the

same protection to German as she did to British subjects, thereby implying that she regarded Damaraland and Namaqualand as within 'her sphere of influence,' though that phrase, with which before long the world was to become so familiar, had not as yet become a recognised formula in the language of African diplomacy. Beyond Walfisch Bay itself no sign of effective occupation at the time could be said to exist, either by the Imperial or by the Cape Government; and notwithstanding the appeals of Sir Bartle Frere, the Government of Lord Beaconsfield turned a deaf ear to every proposal to extend the area of the British territorial sovereignty beyond the port and the fifteen miles adjacent of sea frontage, where it was formally proclaimed in 1878. Nevertheless nothing was definitely said or done to repudiate the idea that Damaraland and Namaqualand were within the sphere of British influence. In 1880, in consequence of further representations from the German Government that the missionaries were being ill treated by the native chiefs, a fresh appeal was made to the British Government, but was met by Lord Granville with a repetition of the views of his predecessor, and this decision was conveyed in a despatch from Lord Kimberley to the Governor of the Cape Colony.[1] Matters now remained dormant for nearly a year, nor did the Cape Government show any desire to obtain a reversal of the decision of the Secretary of State, or to see British liabilities extended beyond Walfisch Bay. In August 1881, a fresh complaint came from the German Government, which elicited a repetition of the decision of the Colonial Office, with which the primary responsibility in these matters lay, though the German Government—in this standing on correct diplomatic ground—declined to recognise anybody as competent to address Foreign Powers except the Foreign Secretary.

Up to this time, as already seen, there had been no intention on the part of Prince Bismarck to allow Germany to enter on a career of colonial expansion in Africa. But the growing unrest in Germany, the tendency of her manufactures under the new protectionist tariff to over-production, and the

[1] December 30, 1880.

consequent clamour of the colonial party for new trade *débouchés*, were gradually forcing him, but unwillingly, to consider the desirability of entering on a new departure. But he still temporised. In November 1882, Herr Lüderitz, a Bremen merchant, had started a project for establishing a factory on the West African coast, and asked his Government for protection in case of need. This led to a repetition of the old inquiry how far such a factory could rely on British protection. Count Herbert Bismarck, through whom the inquiry was made in London, was understood to say that in the event of a refusal the German Government would do their best to extend to the factory the same measure of protection which they gave to their subjects in remote parts of the world, 'but without having the least design to establish any footing in Africa.'[1]

To this communication Lord Granville replied, after consulting Lord Derby on February 23, 1883, that it was necessary to know the exact position of the proposed settlement and factory before giving a definite reply, and that the opinion of the Cape Government must first be taken. Meanwhile Herr Heinrich Vogelsang of Bremen, the representative of Herr Lüderitz, having obtained an assurance from the German Government that if he was successful in acquiring territory not claimed by any other Power he would receive protection, landed at the head of a German expedition in the Bay of Angra Pequena, about 280 miles south of Walfisch Bay, made his way to Bethany across country, and on May 1, 1883, signed a treaty with a chief—John Frederic—by which Herr Lüderitz acquired 215 square miles of land and the sovereign rights of the chief at Angra Pequena, with a sea frontage of ten miles in length. Here very shortly afterwards the German flag was hoisted.

As soon as these events were known an outcry arose in the Cape Colony, which hitherto had shown no desire to occupy Angra Pequena, and even now did not choose to show the slightest readiness to seize the unoccupied

[1] This was the minute made by Sir Julian Pauncefote of the conversation, February 7, 1883.

remainder of the coast.[1] The German Government on August 18, 1883, had notified the German Consul at the Cape that if the rights of other nations were not interfered with thereby, they would be prepared to give protection to Herr Lüderitz's settlement, and a German gunboat took up a permanent station in the Bay of Angra Pequena. A German corvette, the Carola, then appeared in the Bay and gave notice to the commander of the British gunboat, the Boadicea, which had arrived from the Cape, that he was in German territorial waters.

After some preliminary inquiries in September 1883, Count Hatzfeld instructed Count Herbert Bismarck, on November 12, to inquire officially if the British Government had claims on Angra Pequena; and if so, on what were they founded. To this Lord Granville replied by informing the German Government that—

'although her Majesty's Government had not proclaimed the Queen's sovereignty along the whole country, but only at certain points, such as Walfisch Bay and the *islands* of Angra Pequena, they considered that any claim to sovereignty or jurisdiction by a foreign Power between the southern point of Portuguese jurisdiction at latitude 18° S. and the frontier of the Cape Colony would infringe their legitimate rights.'[2]

This was in fact a reassertion of the doctrine laid down in 1868, that the whole tract on the mainland was within the British 'sphere of influence.' On December 31, 1883, Prince Bismarck issued in reply a despatch to the German Ambassador, Count Münster, covering the whole ground, in which, after giving a lucid narrative of what had occurred, he insisted that the acknowledged facts of the situation pointed to the necessity of some civil and political jurisdiction being established, and concluded by saying that—

'if the Government of Great Britain should claim sovereignty over the wide territory, hitherto considered independent, between the Orange River and the 18th degree of south latitude, the Imperial

[1] The Cape Government to Lord Derby, January 30, 1884; Lord Derby to the Cape Government, February 5, 1884.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, November 21, 1883.

Government would, on account of the protection it owes to German trade, esteem it of importance to learn upon what title this claim is based, and what institutions England there possesses which would secure legal protection for German subjects in their commercial enterprises and justly won acquisitions, and would relieve the Empire from the duty of itself providing directly for its subjects in that territory the protection of which they may stand in need.'

This despatch was referred to the Colonial Office. Colonisation, according to Lord Derby's reply, still did not enter into the views of Prince Bismarck. In the despatch, he thought he saw merely an inquiry as to whether it would suit England to annex a larger territory than Walfisch Bay, and perhaps an encouragement to do so, and, in any case, an encouragement to establish effective institutions for the protection of trade.[1] He accordingly entered into leisurely communications with the Cape Government in order to ascertain their views. A change of Government was impending there, owing to the defeat of the Ministry of Mr. Scanlen and Mr. Molteno. The outgoing Ministers were naturally unwilling to assume any responsibility. Their successors, however, were not yet installed, and owing to the consequent delay it was not till May 29, 1884, that an answer from the Cape was sent to the Colonial Office. That answer announced a new departure, for it recommended the assumption by the British Government of the formal control of the whole coast up to Walfisch Bay, including Angra Pequena. On April 25, however, the Imperial German Consul at the Cape, Herr Lippert, had already informed the Cape Government that the German establishments at Angra Pequena were actually under the 'protection' of the Empire, but it remained to be seen whether the action of the German Consul-General was to be supported. Meanwhile, on May 22 the Foreign Office had addressed a letter to the Colonial Office, expressing Lord Granville's 'hope that no unnecessary delay would be allowed to occur in giving an answer to the inquiries made by Count Münster in the month of December last.'

[1] Memorandum of October 7, 1884.

In the midst of these events Count Münster made a remarkable communication to Lord Granville on another question.

Memorandum by Lord Granville.

'Count Münster called on me this morning in Carlton House Terrace. Towards the close of the conversation he said he wished to have a little quiet talk with me on some future occasion. I asked him on what subject. After a little hesitation he said it was one which might startle me a little at first, but would not so after a little reflection. It was Heligoland. It was a place of no importance to us in its present state, whereas it would be of immense importance to Germany, to ourselves, and the whole world, if it was made into a good harbour of refuge. This would be an expensive work for us to undertake. We could not be expected to go to such an expense, whereas Germany would be quite ready to undertake it.

'Prince Bismarck wished to cut a canal into the Baltic, which also would be a great advantage to us, as the most powerful maritime nation of the world. But Heligoland, which of course would be always open to our ships, would be a necessary key to such a plan.

'Count Münster said it was as good as impossible that Germany and England should ever be at war, but the cession of Heligoland would strengthen the good feeling of Germany towards this country to an extraordinary degree. I said I supposed the cession of Gibraltar would strengthen our good relations with Spain; but the Count denied that there was any similarity in the two cases.

'Count Münster begged me to consider the conversation as absolutely personal and confidential, and he trusted that at the present stage I would not even mention the subject to my colleagues, but he would take an early opportunity of renewing the conversation. I asked whether it was not an awkward moment to open such a subject, when it might be supposed we wished to secure the assistance of Germany on another matter.

'Count Münster strongly disclaimed any such idea.

'I said later that I had carefully thought over what Count Münster had said to me, and was pleased to learn by this proof of confidence that the Chancellor was aware of my personal desire to forward any policy which would more closely unite the two countries; but that it was impossible for me to foreshadow what would be the opinion of my colleagues on such a subject without consulting them, excepting that I was sure they would consider in a friendly spirit any communication from me.'[1]

[1] May 17, 1884.

The Cape Government was now tardily arousing itself. The Colonial Office also was asking the Foreign Office that, especially after the proceedings of the Carola, a British ship of war should be sent to Angra Pequena, in order that there should be no ground 'for alleging that the continued absence of British protection made German intervention necessary;'[1] and on June 3 the German Consul at Cape Town was confidentially informed by the Cape Premier that the Cape Colony had determined to take possession of Angra Pequena and all the responsibilities of government. Informed of this, the German Government thereupon at once notified to Lord Granville that it declined to recognise the Colonial Government or the Colonial Office, and that it could only deal with the Foreign Office—a correct position, to which Lord Granville did not demur;[2] and in a despatch to Count Münster of June 10, which again reviewed the whole story, Prince Bismarck stated that he had been misunderstood, and that his intention had been, in his despatch of December 31, 1883, to receive a positive declaration from Lord Granville, that Great Britain had up to that time no pretension to the strip of land now in dispute.

The despatch then proceeded to deny the doctrine of 'spheres of influence' as expressed in the former despatches of Lord Granville, and to contest the right of any country to exclude others unless prepared to assert their own territorial jurisdiction and sovereignty.

'My intention [Prince Bismarck said in conclusion] was to obtain by these inquiries a formal acknowledgment from England that this strip of land was in European opinion *res nullius*, with no shadow of mistrust or offence on either side. My intention was to receive on this point a positive declaration from England that she had up to that time no pretension to, or rightful claim over, that strip of land. Our question could have been answered by England in a week, without referring it to the Cape; it was only a question of a declaration of the recognised possessions of England at that moment.

[1] June 2, 1884.

[2] Count Hatzfeldt to Lord Ampthill, June 4, 1884; Lord Granville to Count Münster, June 7, 1884.

'This simple question became so complicated by England, that Lord Granville, and even more Lord Derby, understood it as a question whether it would suit England to annex still more than Walfisch Bay on that coast. A reference of the question to the Cape Colony, and the awaiting the solution of the ministerial crisis there, would only have been necessary if they required to be assured whether England or its province, the Cape Colony, desired to annex fresh strips of coast in that vicinity. In order to answer our question, a simple inspection of the register of the former English possessions would have sufficed; but this register excluded the entire coast north of the Orange River, excepting Walfisch Bay.

'This is the point on which, according to my conviction, we have not been treated fairly by England. This feeling has been strengthened by the explanations which several English statesmen have given, with the purport that England has a legitimate right to prevent settlements by other nations in the vicinity of English possessions, and that England establishes a sort of Monroe doctrine in Africa against the vicinage of other nations; and, further, that England, always premising that that strip of land is *res nullius*, and the Cape Colony depending on England, allows herself the right to seize this unclaimed land, and dispute the right of any other nation, and especially ours, to claim it.'[1]

With these declarations there arrived almost simultaneously a refusal to recognise the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty relating to the Congo.

An interview followed with Count Herbert Bismarck, in which Lord Granville explained the misunderstandings which had occurred. He pointed out that the relations of Great Britain and her colonies, especially those enjoying representative institutions, were difficult and complicated; that although the German Government were on correct ground in declining to recognise anybody except the British Foreign Office, they could themselves be asked to take into consideration the impossibility of the British Colonial Office consenting, without consultation, to any course which might seem to overlook the position of the Colonial Government on matters of importance to them. There had been misunderstandings on both sides; he denied *in toto* that Lord Derby's attitude had been inimical to Germany; and he undertook

[1] German White Book, 1884, June 10, 1884.

that an immediate answer should now be sent. He regretted that the answer to the note of December 31 had been delayed.

'You are quite right [he continued] in assuming that your Government had no occasion to accept our referring the matter to the Colonial Office and to the Cape Colony Government, and that you had only to treat with the Foreign Office and expect an answer from me. But our administrative and colonial regulations are difficult and complicated.'

Lord Derby, he explained, had understood that Germany desired that Great Britain should take the strip of land under her protection, and he had made his declaration on that understanding, or, as it now proved, on that misunderstanding.[1]

Shortly after this interview Count Münster informed Lord Granville verbally that the German Government could not maintain a friendly attitude on Egyptian matters if Great Britain maintained an unfriendly attitude on colonial questions.

Lord Granville had now to consider the situation in Africa as a whole. It was far more important to obtain a good understanding with Germany in Egypt, than to annex the barren districts on the coast north of the Orange River, or even to maintain the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty. Count Münster was therefore informed on June 22 that the British Government recognised German sovereignty at Angra Pequena. The formal abandonment of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty followed on the 26th, and a Commission was appointed to examine the Fiji claims. The rest was inevitable. It is true that on July 16 the Cape Government—of which Mr. Upington was now Prime Minister—carried a resolution in favour of the annexation of all the remaining territory northward from the Orange River, and as late as August 25 was still expressing a hope to the Governor that it was not yet too late to act. Such resolutions were now belated. On August 7, 1884, Captain Schering, of the ship Elizabet, hoisted the German flag over Angra Pequena; and a few days afterwards the whole coast between 26° south and the Portuguese boundary,

[1] Angra Pequena, *Parliamentary Papers*, 1884, p. 56.

with the exception of Walfisch Bay, was declared to be German territory.

'Prince Bismarck is very grateful to you [Lord Ampthill wrote] for your final settlement of the question, which has produced the most excellent impression throughout Germany, and has really done immense good.'

It was the first time Prince Bismarck had ever mentioned the subject of Angra Pequena to the Ambassador. He recounted what had passed between Lord Granville and Count Münster; and then appealed for an answer to communicate to the Reichstag which would not add fuel to the fire. This answer he received

'just in time to bowl over his enemies, Bamberger and Richter, in the Budget Commission, and he seemed overjoyed at the impression we had produced, and the consequent relief he felt himself at having been enabled to dispel the storm which threatened him in the press and at the coming general election.

'The press is all praise at the fairness, justice, and friendliness of your decision, and I hear from all sides that it has done immense good to our international relations; for the Germans had set their hearts on the protection of Herr Lüderitz's enterprise at Angra Pequena.

'The Crown Prince, who shared the national craving, but dreaded the irritation and anger it was producing against England in public opinion, now shares the national delight at your decision, which re-establishes the good feeling between England and Germany we all attach so much importance to. The Crown Princess, who dined with us last night, was also beyond measure happy at the general contentment and altered tone of the press. . . . For my part I feel immensely relieved at your having dispelled the threatening incubus. I am also glad you have consented to appoint a mixed Commission of two to look into the Fiji claims, a concession Prince Bismarck was earnestly anxious to obtain. It is a remarkable fact that Prince Bismarck, contrary to his convictions and his will, has been driven by public opinion into the inauguration of the colonial policy he had hitherto denounced as detrimental to the concentration of German strength and power.'[1]

An alternative policy on the Congo had now to be considered. The King of the Belgians had by this time discovered that both France and Portugal were likely to interfere

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, June 28, 1884.

with his plans, and in 1883 he had become engaged in a long private correspondence, carried on personally with Lord Granville, in order to obtain the protection of his nascent enterprise both from attacks by France and from obstruction by the vague inland claims to territory made by Portugal. He also proposed the conversion of his proposed acquisition into a recognised State. Lord Granville was sceptical how long the King would desire to maintain the character of 'the great philanthropic enterprise'—such was the current phrase of the day—and also believed that he had fomented the agitation both at home and abroad against the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty.[1] It seemed to him that, even without questioning the excellence of the King's intentions, a new state founded in the interior of a vast and almost unexplored continent, and only loosely attached by the personal tie of kingship to a small and weak European state, would be likely to attract to itself the offscourings of Europe, and that every adventurer, whose past exploits made it desirable for him to quit his own country for his country's good, would be anxious to seek a career in lands where, in the service of a nominally civilised Government, he would be able to give a free hand to all the worst impulses of human nature. The sequel has only too well justified these apprehensions. But at the time the public mind was dazzled by the vision of a beneficent monarch pouring all the blessings of civilisation into the savage regions of a distant continent with an unstinted hand. The crowned heads of Continental states were assiduously canvassed ; the support of a large section of the European press was obtained; the good-will of the missionary world was secured, and those who ventured to question the wisdom of 'the great philanthropic enterprise' became the objects of a carefully organised system of attack and misrepresentation. Nor was the case against the enterprise an easy one to state, for it depended entirely on an estimate of probabilities in regions of which the public knew next to nothing, except that they were in some way connected with the popular name of Mr. Stanley, and that Mr. Stanley was

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Aberdare, February 20, 1884.

in the service of the King of the Belgians. Thus it was that the King obtained the ear of Europe, and the Foreign Office had to yield. One advantage only the existence of the proposed new State held out. Since the failure of the Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, it afforded the only hope of preventing a practical monopoly of the interior of Africa being obtained by France. Mr. Stanley himself could not be induced at first to realise that the danger to the Belgian enterprise came not so much from Portugal as from the hitherto unsuspected intention of France to descend on the river from the north. When, however, he at length grasped the fact, he acted with characteristic promptitude. Losing no time in explanations or attempts to justify his former opinions, he at once placed himself in communication with the Foreign Office. It was quickly determined that, the Anglo-Portuguese negotiation having failed, the only reasonable plan now was that Great Britain, Portugal, and the King of the Belgians should co-operate to prevent the control of the Middle and Lower river falling into the hands of France, and to place the river itself under international control. In order to avoid the dangers which Lord Granville apprehended, it was decided to bind down the new State, by conditions as stringent as those in the defunct Anglo-Portuguese Treaty, to secure freedom of trade and the protection of the natives.

Already in the course of the previous negotiations, Portugal had expressed her willingness not only to accept the English proposal of placing the river with the concurrence of the other Great Powers under international control, but to consent to the whole question of the future of the Congo being considered in a Conference. Communications were now officially made by the German Government proposing the assembly of a Conference at Berlin. Lord Granville at once accepted the proposal. It was agreed that the deliberations should include the settlement of all outstanding questions on both coasts of Africa, and not of those connected with the Congo basin only; and that the Conference should decide the principles on which the division of the continent should

be based, and thus avoid the constant danger of collision over the future delimitation of territories.

When the Ministers separated at the end of the session of 1884, it was believed that the ill-will of Germany had been successfully conjured, and that all outstanding questions in Africa would be amicably settled without difficulty in the winter at Berlin. But the last had not yet been heard of Angra Pequena.

In 1872 Herr von Thile, Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs at Berlin, speaking of the Kulturkampf, told Mr. Odo Russell that Prince Bismarck's determination 'to raise the storm and fight the Church was so sudden, that he and Bismarck's private secretaries could mark the day and the hour of the change that came over him like an inspiration.'[1] A moment in the development of German policy had now arrived in 1884, when a sudden impulse of a similar kind decided Prince Bismarck to make a new departure, and for reasons of state to treat the Foreign Office of Great Britain as he had formerly treated the Pope. It has been seen that in the last sittings of the Conference on Egyptian Finance a sharp passage of arms had taken place between Lord Granville and Count Münster in regard to the introduction of the Egyptian sanitary question contrary to the stipulations which had limited the Conference to the discussion of the financial question alone. The conduct of the German Ambassador was ominous.

'I am in perfect despair [Lord Ampthill wrote in the early days of August] at Prince Bismarck's present inclination to increase his popularity before the general election by taking up an anti-English attitude. Compelled by the colonial mania, which has gradually come to the surface in Germany, to act contrary to his better convictions in the Angra Pequena question, he has discovered an unexplored mine of popularity in starting a colonial policy, which public opinion persuades itself to be anti-English; and the slumbering theoretical envy of the Germans at our wealth and our freedom has awakened and taken the form of abuse of everything English in the press. The laxity of our quarantine regulations has always been a German grievance, and the news that the German Government has brought it

[1] Mr. Odo Russell to Lord Granville, March 16, 1872.

before the Conference, has been hailed with enthusiastic approval in the German press. Men like Professor Virchow and Dr. Koch accuse us openly of having brought the cholera into France. My hope is that this anti-English mania may not last longer, but my fear is that it will increase until the general elections are over.'[1]

At Court the feeling was different. 'At Berlin, particularly in high quarters,' Count Münster wrote privately to Lord Granville, 'the tone of our press towards England is very much regretted and condemned.' But, he added, 'all will change after the elections: thunderclouds come and go.'[2] The German Ambassador spoke in perfect good faith. No more than anyone else did he foresee the storm coming up over the North Sea, which threatened him as well as others. A settlement had been obtained of the German claims in Fiji, which if it erred did so by the concessions it made to Germany. Nevertheless Prince Bismarck was apparently not satisfied.

'I have never had a more arduous fight [Lord Granville told Lord Ampthill]; the difficulty being that the Colonial Office had a very strong case which they had already put in writing, and their opposition was strongly backed by the Chancellor. . . . Count Münster, who prides himself on being a grumbling Tory in London, is thought in Berlin to be an advanced Liberal suffering from Anglomania.' . . . 'Bismarck's attitude is disagreeable. He has always been violently opposed to colonisation. He is now obliged to yield, not to Hamburg or any of the foreign merchants, but to a chauvinist cry which has sprung up in Berlin and in the South of Germany, and he desires to make capital out of it for the ensuing elections. He hates Gladstone, and I believe is convinced that he wrote Escott's article signed "G." in the *Fortnightly*. . . .'[3]

On August 22, accordingly, Prince Bismarck, in a note delivered at the Foreign Office through the German Chargé d'Affaires in regard to the belated expression of the wishes of the Cape Colony relating to Angra Pequena, which by this time had become known at Berlin, went out of his way, though the question was already in principle settled, to warn the British

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, August 2, 1884.
[2] Count Münster to Lord Granville, August 25, 1884.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Ampthill, April 23, August 15, November 18, 1884.

Government in menacing language, 'that they must bear in mind that the friendly relations of the two countries depended on their denying assent to the proposals of the Cape Colony.' The note then proceeded to renew all the old complaints about the delay in the reply to the despatch of December 31; and ended by charging Lord Derby with employing the time during which the German Government had in good faith been awaiting a reply to the despatch, in an attempt to encourage the Cape Government to seize the coast and thereby forestall German action.[1]

In the Liberal Secretary of State for the Colonies, Prince Bismarck had not failed to recognise the old Conservative Foreign Secretary, the Lord Stanley of 1867, who in his opinion had betrayed Europe over the Luxemburg question by allowing his own signature to the Treaty of that year to be explained away: a proceeding which he had never forgiven. In order to avoid war between France and Prussia, it had been agreed that Luxemburg should be neutralised, that the Powers should guarantee the neutrality of the Duchy, and that it should be placed under their collective guarantee. But the ink was hardly dry on the paper which embodied these conditions, before explanations were added as to the character of this collective guarantee by Lord Derby, then Prime Minister, which seemed to reduce the international sanction thereby given to the level of a moral sanction only. The Treaty, it was explained, gave a right to make war, but it imposed no obligation; none in any case on any of the high contracting Powers, unless the others all fulfilled their own obligations simultaneously. If this interpretation were correct, Lord Granville had said at the time, speaking from the benches opposite, it was difficult indeed to understand the importance which Prussia had attached to the guarantee, or why Lord Stanley had shown such hesitation in becoming a party to it.[2] The old wound still rankled, and if in 1884 considerations of domestic policy were pushing Prince Bismarck into a course of conduct

[1] In the German White Book.

[2] *Hansard*, clxxxvii. 379, 1922–23; clxxxviii. 154, 968.

hostile to Great Britain in order to secure the colonial vote in the German Parliament, he was not discouraged by the reflection that he was simultaneously annoying the Colonial Secretary. There were those also who deemed that Prince Bismarck enjoyed the thought that he was once more opening up the ancient chapter of accounts with England, which, notwithstanding all the recollections of 1814 and 1815, no German statesman has ever entirely forgotten in regard to the betrayal of Frederick the Great by Lord Bute in 1762, when the British Minister not only deserted his ally, but while the alliance still subsisted was believed to have revealed the plans of Frederick for the next campaign against France to Choiseul himself.[1]

The delivery of the note of August 22 alarmed Lord Granville.

'I am afraid we shall find Bismarck [he wrote to Lord Northbrook] a great difficulty in our path. He is making use of us for electioneering purposes: he hates Gladstone, and he will not easily forgive the snub to Münster in the Conference, however unavoidable it was. We have really met all his open colonial grievances: German claims in Fiji, Angra Pequena, and the South Sea Islands, but he has a secret one. Münster sounded, or rather told me he was about sounding, me as to Heligoland. He said that the Chancellor was bent on opening a way into the Baltic, that for this purpose there ought to be a great harbour at Heligoland, that we could not be expected to spend the large capital required, that Germany was ready to do if ceded to her, and to admit England to all the advantages of it. He begged me not to mention it even to my colleagues. I only did so to Gladstone, and we agreed upon a dilatory course.

'But neither Münster nor Herbert Bismarck ever gave me any opportunity of mentioning it. I have recently seen an allusion to the canal in the papers. About twelve years ago I consulted the War Office and the Admiralty as to the advantages of Heligoland to us. The War Office saw none. The Admiralty was strongly in favour of its importance. Their reasons seemed to me a little

[1] See Bismarck, *Gedanken und Erinnerungen*, ii. 233, 234. For the opposite side of the question see the 'Buckinghamshire Papers,' vol. i., in the *Journal of the Historical Society*. The subject will be found fully discussed in the recently published *Life of Chatham* by Herr Albert de Ruville, vol. ii. ch. 16; vol. iii. ch. 1.

far-fetched. The cession would be unpopular in itself, and still more so on account of the obvious submission to the Chancellor. Gladstone, Derby, and I would not be the best people to make it. But it sometimes occurs to me whether it would not be a price worth paying, if it could secure a perfectly satisfactory end to the Egyptian financial mess.' [1]

A motion had during the session been brought forward by an independent Conservative member of Parliament, Sir John Gorst, in favour of the surrender of Heligoland to Germany; but it received no support from the recognised leaders of the party, and was resisted by the Government; nor was the House of Commons made aware that any communication was likely to be made on the subject by Germany.

Count Herbert Bismarck, as much disturbed as Lord Granville himself, and anxious for the maintenance of good relations with Great Britain, wrote to Lord Granville from abroad attempting to explain what was happening. He asked Lord Granville to believe that

'the strong language of the newspapers and the complaints of the German Government about all these trans-oceanic questions, have no other meaning but to prove the strong desire of the German people and the German Government to maintain the actual relations with England.'

The proceedings nevertheless of the Cape Government, Count Herbert Bismarck said he was very sorry to have to say, had caused

'a most painful impression on my father, and led him to believe that the British Colonial Office attaches less importance to the good understanding with Germany than your Lordship's department does. . . . It may be that the relations between the Colonial Office and the Colonial Government—the sort of self-government the latter enjoy, and their little connection with or rather independence from the foreign policy of England—may now and then create the impression abroad that this policy is sometimes lacking in frankness. At all events I know that if there exists some irritation in Germany, it has merely been caused by the Colonial Office and not by the Foreign Office.' [2]

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Northbrook, August 16, 1884.
[2] Count Herbert Bismarck to Lord Granville, August 30, 1884.

'It is possible that Heligoland may be at the bottom of it,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone, 'but neither Münster nor Bismarck ever spoke about it after the first opening speech I told you Münster had made.'[1] Meanwhile stories of the renewal of some form of alliance or understanding between the three Emperors, and a projected meeting between them in the late autumn of the year, with no friendly intentions to Great Britain on the part of Germany or Russia, were now again current, and were carefully noted by Lord Ampthill.

'The progress of democracy in England [he told Lord Granville] is a cause of very serious alarm to the Sovereigns and Governments; and they purpose to meet it by consolidating the Monarchical League.'[2]

These were the last words addressed by Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville. Recent events had greatly weighed on his spirits; but his sudden death, which took place on the 25th, was unexpected. It is difficult to overrate the importance of this untimely event. Lord Ampthill had been Ambassador at Berlin for thirteen years. His peculiar early training—he had been almost entirely educated abroad by his talented mother, Lady William Russell—his intimate knowledge of men and affairs on the Continent, his special acquaintance with every turn of the German mind, the personal influence which he had gained over the Chancellor, as well as at Court, rendered him essentially the man of the situation. His death raised the break in the continuity of the functions of the Embassy from a misfortune to a calamity. The good understanding with Germany hinged largely on his personality.

'The death of Lord Ampthill [Count Herbert Bismarck wrote] is a great loss. He was most popular in political as well as in social circles in this country; and if he had not been ailing and low-spirited for some time past, he might have kept our relations free from every sort of uneasiness.'[3]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 18, 1884.
[2] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, August 16, 1884.
[3] Count Herbert Bismarck to Lord Granville, August 28, 1884.

Lord Dufferin had just accepted the Viceroyalty of India on the termination of Lord Ripon's period of office. Two of the most important European Embassies were thus simultaneously vacant. It was of the greatest importance that both should be filled up quickly, especially the Embassy at Berlin. 'The Turk,' Lord Granville observed, 'has behaved so badly that it would pay him out to send him Morier,' who was said to model his diplomatic manner on that of Lord Stratford de Redcliffe. Sir Robert Morier's name was also mentioned in connection with Berlin, but an intimation was almost immediately received from Prince Bismarck that the appointment would be profoundly distasteful. For the Constantinople Embassy, Mr. Gladstone preferred that an offer should be made to the Lord President, Lord Carlingford, who, as already seen, on the resignation of the Duke of Argyll had been brought into the Government because of his knowledge of the details of the Irish Land Acts and of Irish business generally.[1] If he accepted the Embassy, the calculation was that by a rearrangement of offices some existing Cabinet difficulties might be adjusted. Lord Carlingford was accordingly given the choice of the two vacant Embassies, though Lord Granville made the offer unwillingly, not desiring to lose Lord Carlingford as a colleague. It was also suggested that Lord Acton might be offered whichever of the two Embassies Lord Carlingford did not accept, and that Sir William White should go to Constantinople unless an outsider were appointed.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *August* 15, 1884.

'There is no immediate hurry, but we must soon be provided with a successor for Dufferin.

'He must belong to diplomacy, or be an outsider.

'If the latter, I can only think of—

'1. Ripon (unlikely to accept, but) not out of the question. His pro-Mahommedan policy ought to have a good effect, and he is a very persistent man—with wealth.

[1] Lord Carlingford also held the Privy Seal.

'2. Carlingford (he could only be quietly sounded).

'3. E. Fitzmaurice (not a bad man for the place; he would be a great loss in the Office, but probably a better man could be found for the House of Commons). If the former,

'1. Thornton, or still better Ford.

'2. Morier, the eleventh man in the corps, if not made Ambassador, and especially if a junior was put over his head, would be frantic. Ford would only go over the heads of West, Stuart, Corbett, and Morier. He has been extraordinarily successful in settling questions. 'G.'

MR. GLADSTONE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

HAWARDEN CASTLE, CHESTER, *August* 16, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—1. I hope the sea air will have enabled you by this time to expel the gout, which has been so unmannerly, and persevere.

'2. As to the successor, I am for various reasons against Ripon for Constantinople; and against E. Fitzmaurice, to whom, however, in many points I attach great value in the House of Commons. Carlingford, if he has the other qualities, has the advantage of a very equitable mind. I think you offered it to him on the formation of the Government? (Or is this my old age again?) But this is no reason against a repetition. It is one thing from a new Government, and another from an old one. If, however, it comes to be offered, I should like it so done as if possible to insure acceptance.

'Ever yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

Lord Granville was probably neither astonished nor displeased at the refusal which he at once received from the Lord President to quit an office which had only recently been pressed upon him, in order that, for thinly disguised reasons, he should enter at a comparatively late period of life on a career to which he had hitherto been an entire stranger. Eventually, Sir Edward Thornton, Ambassador at St. Petersburg, was appointed Ambassador to the Sublime Porte, and Sir William White was sent on a special mission to Constantinople pending the arrival of Sir Edward Thornton. Sir Robert Morier was appointed to succeed Sir Edward Thornton; and Sir Edward Malet, who, in addition to other high qualifications, had been Consul-General at Cairo in 1882, and consequently had a ripe knowledge of Egyptian

affairs, was sent as Ambassador to Berlin. The necessities of the home situation were met by the resignation of Mr. Dodson, who, more facile than Lord Carlingford, accepted a peerage, and was succeeded as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster by Sir George Trevelyan, who received a seat in the Cabinet. But while these negotiations were proceeding, precious time had been lost, and in the interval the Berlin Embassy was standing vacant at a critical period.

It became clear in September that Prince Bismarck was returning to the attack. There was reliable information from the heads of great financial houses on the Continent as to his ill-humour and the dangers arising from it.

'Bismarck is very angry [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone]; he will defend the rights of the German indemnity and bondholders, he will oppose illegal action on the part of the Egyptians, and give as an *ultima ratio* the mandate of Europe to France, and in his opinion we should not like to face this.'

According to information received from Vienna, it was the opinion of Count Kalnoky, the successor of Baron Haymerlé, that Great Britain must no longer reckon upon Bismarck's friendly support in Egypt. 'The last communication to the Cape from the Colonial Office,' Lord Granville told Mr. Gladstone, 'was unfortunate. Northbrook, Lyons, and I are strongly of opinion that the Colonial Office should not immediately issue a proclamation as to the British limits of New Guinea, without further communication with Germany—unless we mean purposely to quarrel with Bismarck.'[1] The proclamation was accordingly adjourned, but even this was not enough.

'Prince Bismarck [Lord Ampthill had warned Lord Granville in 1882] has never got over or forgiven Goschen's departure from the advice he was asked to give in the Greek question. Dr. Busch confided to me that if Bismarck had ever known that Münster took upon himself to authorise the publication of Goschen's confidential despatches from Berlin in our Blue Book on Greece, he would have instantaneously dismissed Münster from the Imperial service.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, September 1, 1884.

Happily Dr. Busch says Bismarck was at Kissingen, and had given orders that nothing should be sent to him while he was attending to his cure, so that the Foreign Office had been able to keep the official publication of Goschen's conversations with him at the time they were laid before Parliament, and the official press was told by Hatzfeld to pass them over in silence. It is astonishing how cordially Bismarck *hates* our Blue Books. . . . I cannot sufficiently recommend to you to abstain from publishing any of my despatches about Bismarck in the Blue Books, for if once he takes offence at anything we publish, he will take his revenge by making himself as disagreeable as possible to us for the rest of his days.'[1]

This warning now received a peculiar point, for Prince Bismarck had just discovered a despatch—this time in the Blue Books relating to the West African coast—to the publication of which he declared he had not consented, and he raised the question into one of first-rate importance.

During the bombardment by a German ship of a native village on the coast near the Cameroons, some British property had been destroyed, and a claim for damages was made on Germany by the injured parties, for which the support of the British Foreign Office was invoked. The Foreign Office was anxious to present the papers relating to this question at once; and to end the Blue Book containing them with a remonstrance and claim on the subject of the bombardment. It is not considered correct to publish a document of this kind until it is in the hands of the party to whom it is addressed. Lord Granville accordingly addressed the note to Count Münster, instead of sending the remonstrance through the Berlin Embassy; and the papers were presented to Parliament next day. Prince Bismarck resented both the method and substance of the communication. He made a violent scene in an interview with the Ambassador, and at once proceeded to revive the old claim for compensation by Great Britain for the German property injured by the bombardment of Alexandria in 1882. A fresh cause of grievance was simultaneously discovered on the unhappy West African coast. Prince Metternich is reported to have said that wherever there is trouble, you should look for a Pole.

[1] Lord Ampthill to Lord Granville, July 15, 1882.

Acting on this maxim, Prince Bismarck had discovered a Russian Pole named Rogozinski near the Cameroons. Rogozinski professed to be the agent of a Russian society of exploration, which, on inquiry, was found to have no existence. He represented the society as owning a region near Ambas Bay, where the English Baptists had a settlement. This property he offered to sell to the British Government, but it appeared that the property did not belong to him, because it already belonged to the missionaries. This Pole, Prince Bismarck declared to be a British agent, and the cause of every trouble in that region. Rogozinski had the honour of being denounced by the German Chancellor in the Reichstag, and was constantly mentioned in the Berlin papers as a public enemy.[1] A special map to illustrate his evil doings was published, and a formal repudiation of him and of all his works was demanded. Prince Bismarck further complained that the projected British annexations on the Middle Niger would cut off Germany in the Cameroons from the interior; and he said he must insist on guarding what must now be termed German Damaraland and Namaqualand from being cut off in a similar way by British aggression from their legitimate extension eastwards.

Lord Derby, suddenly arousing himself, and not unaware of the almost personal ill-will with which Prince Bismarck regarded him, was of opinion that a policy of indefinite complacency to the Chancellor would be a mistake. An opportunity fortunately presented itself, on the East Coast of Africa, of taking a determined line. The Bay of St. Lucia, on the coast of Zululand, was considered at the time to be nearly the only good harbour besides Delagoa Bay, which belonged to the Portuguese. It was also believed to be the possible terminus of a future line of railway from the Transvaal to the coast. The watchful eye of Herr Lüderitz had for some time past been fixed on the spot. Herr Gerhard Rolfs was at the same time devising a scheme, with the full

[1] 'St. von Rogozinski's Reisen im Kamerun Gebiete: Gesetz von Bruno Hassenstein,' published in Petermann's *Geographische Mitteilungen*, Jahrgang 1884.

knowledge of his Government, to establish German predominance at Zanzibar, and little doubt existed that communications were being carried on at this time with emissaries of the Transvaal Republic which diplomatically could not be avowed. Colonel Schiel, a German in the service of the Republic, had obtained a concession of lands in the neighbourhood of the Bay of St. Lucia from Dinizulu, a native chief; and by Colonel Schiel an arrangement was projected, under which Herr Einwald, one of Herr Lüderitz's numerous agents, was to repeat at St. Lucia the performance of his chief at Angra Pequena. But the scheme leaked out, partly through the indiscretions of Herr Gerhard Rolfs himself, and the Home and Cape Governments at the critical moment were both on the alert. On December 18, Her Majesty's ship Goshawk hoisted the British flag at St. Lucia Bay, in virtue of an old treaty with King Panda dating back to 1843, and an intimation was then given to the German Government that there was no intention to retire. This act of vigour was followed by the assertion of the determination of the British Government to prevent the road to the north from the Cape through Bechuanaland being blocked, either by annexations to the Transvaal Republic, or by the creation of small Boer republics by emigrants from the Transvaal. Sir Charles Warren was despatched in the last days of 1884 with a strong force to Bechuanaland, and although the final results of his expedition do not fall within the limits of this work, the decisive step which stemmed the westward extension of the Transvaal, and for ever determined the future of those regions, was thereby taken. Meanwhile, Sir John Kirk had effectually checked the schemes of Herr Rolfs at Zanzibar,[1] and Mr. H. H. Johnston was sent on a confidential mission inland which ultimately led to the acquisition of the territory now known as British East Africa.[2]

'It was decided [Lord Granville informed the Queen] to advise your Majesty to annex to the Cape Colony the whole coast line

[1] See Busch, *Memoirs of Bismarck*, iii. 132, 144–145.

[2] See Sir H. H. Johnston's observations: *Journal of the Royal Colonial Institute*, session 1903-4. No. 5. P. 317.

properly belonging to it, but not to extend the annexations merely for the purpose of excluding the chance of the Germans settling there.'[1]

In all these things Prince Bismarck saw fresh occasions for recrimination. Nevertheless he was as usual disposed to respect a display of vigour, and as his only real object was to secure a majority in Parliament, he had no intention of pushing matters beyond a certain point.

The German Ambassador at the time, it has been seen, was Count Münster. By nature courteous and considerate, his personal connection with England by marriage, made this former Hanoverian statesman and actual German diplomatist peculiarly anxious to interpret the unpleasant communications of which he was at this time so frequently the bearer, in the most conciliatory fashion of which they admitted, to soften down the asperities which they contained, and to maintain cordial relations generally, though aware that he thereby only increased the number of his enemies at the German Foreign Office and in the German press, who were clamouring for his recall, in order that Count Herbert Bismarck might replace him. All through November it rained notes and hailed verbal communications. Early in December a crisis nearly took place, for on the first day of that month—

'Count Münster [to quote Lord Granville's own words] told me that he had received a letter from Prince Bismarck with reference to a complaint which the Chancellor had made of my having betrayed confidential communications of his to the French Government with a view to creating difficulties between the two countries. He was aware that this was not the fact.'[2]

A note embodying this unusual communication, and couched in language as unconciliatory as the substance, was eventually shelved and agreed to be treated as *non-avenu*. On December 10, Lord Granville was able to inform Mr. Gladstone that Prince Bismarck had 'entirely withdrawn the complaint of my having betrayed his confidence about Egypt to Waddington.'[3] Voluminous papers were at this time presented to Parliament, fully explaining the whole of the

[1] Lord Garnville to the Queen, January 3, 1885.
[2] Minute by Lord Granville, December 9, 1884.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 10, 1884.

transactions relating to Angra Pequena ; but on the basis of inspired statements published in the German press, the British Government was still believed to be insulting and neglecting the German Government. 'Our press has not been mollified by the *pièces justificatives* on Angra Pequena,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone in the last days of this stormy year. 'As far as I can see, there is a wild and irrational spirit abroad,' Mr. Gladstone replied with his usual combativeness, 'to which for one I do not feel at all disposed to give in.' [1]

New Guinea was the principal *cheval de bataille* of Prince Bismarck. At the last Cabinet meeting held before the autumn recess, it had been decided to proclaim a British Protectorate over the whole of the island except the portion at the western end already occupied by the Dutch. But an intimation of possible German opposition was quickly bruited abroad, and the decisions of the Cabinet were accordingly not carried out in their entirety ; Lord Granville and Lord Derby deciding to limit annexation to the southern shore with the adjacent islands. This decision not only led to a sharp expression of discontent by some members of the Cabinet who had not been consulted as to this change of front, but was also unwelcome to the Australian colonies, which had urgently desired the annexation of the whole of the unoccupied part of the island. Nevertheless Prince Bismarck still complained—though the good-will of the colonies had been risked in order to please him—of the suddenness and extent of the British occupation. There were also renewed grievances about Samoa and Tonga, where a species of *condominium* existed, and large concessions had been made in the previous year, which it was at the time believed had satisfied the German claims.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *September* 30, 1884.

'A very awkward question has arisen. You remember the discussion of the Cabinet, upon which a despatch to Berlin was founded, on the subject of New Guinea.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 25 ; Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 26, 1884.

The Germans had previously admitted our right to the south side of New Guinea, opposite Australia. The Colonial Office thought it necessary that we should have more, and take some of the country north of the island.

'Derby would have liked to issue the proclamation previous to giving any information of our intentions to Germany.

'But he yielded to the opinion of Northbrook, of Lyons, and myself, that we could only do so if we wished to quarrel with the Germans; and I wrote to announce our intention, and it was settled to delay by telegraph for a few days the ship which was to carry out the instructions.

'I was going to-day to suggest to the Colonial Office that we had waited long enough, when I received a letter from Plessen saying that after the previous declarations the projected extension of the British Protectorate in the north and north-east of New Guinea comes unexpectedly upon the Imperial Government, and they wish provisionally to reserve to themselves the consideration thereof.[1]

'The Imperial Government conceive that the delimitation of the areas which interest both sides should be the subject of a friendly understanding by means of a Commission.

'The Colonial Office and Childers are very strong that we must not irritate the Australians in this matter; and the matter does not brook delay.

'But it seems necessary to have a Cabinet before Derby and I can take an irrevocable step. 'G.'

Mr. Robert Meade was proceeding as a member of the British Mission to the Conference at Berlin on African affairs. He was Under Secretary at the Colonial Office, and had formerly been Lord Granville's Private Secretary. He still enjoyed his special confidence, and it was determined to take advantage of his presence at Berlin to try to secure a confidential exchange of views with Prince Bismarck on the Colonial question. On December 12 a long interview took place between him and Dr. Busch, at which Mr. Meade explained the views of the Colonial Office, and pointed out how baseless was the idea that the action of the Colonial Office had been animated by feelings of hostility to Germany; indeed, the exact opposite was the case, and in the Colonies the feeling prevailed that undue deference had been shown to German desires, not only in Australasia but

[1] Baron Plessen was Secretary of the German Embassy in London.

elsewhere. Thus, for example, he reminded Dr. Busch that it had been decided to accept the German annexation of the Cameroons; that the Colonial Office had suggested that Germany would do well to annex the mouths of the remaining rivers, the Lunyassi, the Kwa-Kwa and others, between their frontier and the French frontier; that Bageidah and Togo on the confines of the Gold Coast had been taken by Germany without protest; and that the Colonial Office had informed the Foreign Office that it preferred Germany as a neighbour to France. The same deference to Germany had also been shown, Mr. Meade proceeded to point out, in New Guinea and the adjacent islands, in regard to which he now sketched out a detailed plan of agreement which the Colonial Office would, in his opinion, accept. The lower part of New Guinea, he pointed out, was very narrow. At the lowest part it was only nineteen miles broad. The establishment of another Power, or of filibusters and escaped convicts from New Caledonia, would be especially dangerous to the British Protectorate and the neighbouring Australian colonies. Halfway up the coast was the Macleay territory, the natives of which had specially asked for British protection; and if any portion of the north end (on which it was believed there were no German traders established) was left unoccupied, the result would be that it would become an Alsatia, in which all the crimes would be committed which a protectorate is designed to prevent. The establishment of a British Protectorate on part of the southern shore had been carried out only just in time to stop a scheme possessing exceptionally objectionable features, which was to be carried out under the protection of the French flag. Any arrangement, however, which went outside New Guinea and the islands immediately adjacent and embraced the Pacific would, Mr. Meade acknowledged, have to be in some degree of a tripartite nature, as France had legitimate claims there. He then explained the proposed division between the German and British Protectorates. To this plan Dr. Busch, who represented Prince Bismarck, professed to lend a favourable ear, and in another interview a week later he allowed Mr. Meade to

suppose that Prince Bismarck was equally favourable. Great, therefore, was Mr. Meade's astonishment when on the 19th the British negotiators at Berlin became aware that Germany had annexed the whole coast down to the Gulf of Huon and several of the adjacent islands, thus commanding for the future the main trade route from Singapore. 'The German Government,' Mr. Meade wrote, 'have behaved very shabbily by you. . . . Dr. Busch has behaved equally ill to me.'[1] Nor was this all. Count Münster had informed Lord Granville that Germany would take no action in Samoa till a definite settlement had been arrived at, and yet it now transpired that Germany had sent ships there, had made a treaty, and had hoisted the German flag.

Meanwhile the Berlin Conference was continuing its labours in a hostile atmosphere and amid dangerous surroundings. To Sir Edward Malet, as a matter of course, Lord Granville assigned the post of First Plenipotentiary, and he had desired to send with him one of the Under Secretaries either of the Foreign or the Colonial Office, who had been in active touch throughout with the recent negotiations. He first decided to appoint the Parliamentary Under Secretary of the Foreign Office, but the autumn session of Parliament held in 1884 making the appointment impossible, it had been decided, as already mentioned, to send Mr. Robert Meade. Far more important, however, than the choice of the principal negotiators, were the measures to be taken in order to secure the adequate technical treatment of the details of the geographical questions which were to come before the Conference, and of the juridical questions arising in connection with them. It was necessary that at this critical conjuncture the English representatives should be able to hold their own in matters in which Germany expected to show an easy superiority on a field where geographical knowledge and scientific experience were all-important, and new problems of international law had to be settled by the adaptation of old principles to fresh and hitherto unforeseen conditions. Mr. Percy Anderson, the chief of the African Department

[1] Mr. Robert Meade to Lord Granville, December 20, 1884.

of the Foreign Office, and Sir Edward Hertslet, the Archivist of the Foreign Office, were consequently attached to the Mission; and with them from outside the limits of the Foreign Office went the celebrated jurist Sir Travers Twiss, Mr. J. Bolton the well-known geographer, and Sir Eyre Evans Crowe of the Consular service, who combined with a wide commercial experience a literary reputation which had rendered his name familiar in the German capital. No stronger staff of experts ever represented this country abroad, and thus it came to pass that a mission which triumphant critics in Berlin had begun by describing as an English pilgrimage to Canossa, was rescued from opprobrium and converted into something like a victory.

It is a well-worn truism that events loom very differently in the eyes of posterity from what they appear to be in contemporary opinion, and the 'Berlin Act' may some day be considered the most remarkable event in Lord Granville's long tenure of the Foreign Office. It was signed by the representatives of all the Powers, except the United States of America, on February 24, 1885. Only a brief sketch can be given in these pages of its contents. It enacted freedom of trade for all nations within a region which, speaking generally, may be said to correspond with the vast basin of the Congo. The Free Trade zone thus established was given a further extension on the East Coast, so as to include large portions of the basin of the Zambesi and its affluent, the Shiré. Differential duties were prohibited, and freedom of navigation on these rivers was decreed. The Congo itself was to be placed under an International River Commission, and the same conditions as to navigation were extended to the Niger and its tributaries; but the execution of the regulations, following the analogy of the Russian claims on the Kilia mouths of the Danube, it was claimed should be entrusted to England and France respectively within the limits of their territorial acquisitions. The rules were also laid down under which, in order to determine the future possession of the unexplored territories of the interior, effective occupation should be recognised as a title for annexation; and by Article VI. the existence of

such a thing as 'a sphere of influence' as distinct from a territorial acquisition was for the first time formally recognised. The Powers also once more agreed to suppress slavery and the slave trade, and to protect religious liberty throughout the African continent.

Such were the main provisions of this epoch-making document. Meanwhile a separate set of negotiations was being conducted for the recognition by each of the Powers of the new Congo State. In the Treaty between Germany and the new state the boundaries of the state were laid down on a map attached to the Treaty; and to this Treaty, Great Britain and the other Powers successively adhered. The claims of Portugal and France were also defined, the French claims being successfully restrained, though with difficulty, from reaching down the northern bank as far as the mouth of the Congo. The claims of Portugal to the southern bank and to an important *enclave* on the north, dear to Portuguese patriotism for historical reasons, were recognised, but within carefully defined limits. The Congo Free State obtained the northern bank, which Sir Robert Morier had once hoped to see recognised as a British possession.

When Parliament met again in 1885, the general terms of the Berlin Act—though not yet signed—were known. The public mind was at the time entirely occupied with other and more stirring events. A great disaster had occurred in another part of the African continent, and the shadow of war was falling over the Far East. But even in that moment of fierce controversy, when every other question was dwarfed by comparison, it was felt that the Foreign Office had extricated itself at Berlin with success from a difficult position, and had succeeded in effecting a permanent settlement of momentous questions without loss either of dignity or of any important national interest.

A curious incident which diversified these transactions has here to be related. At the end of the year Prince Bismarck was ill and suffering from neuralgic pains. The climate of winter in Berlin as usual aggravated the complaint, and in December Lord Granville was startled by a suggestion that

Prince Bismarck thought of seeking a better climate in Egypt —that the Ambassador favoured the plan, and indeed had himself in the first instance made the bold suggestion.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

(*Telegram.*) *December* 26, 1884.

'Bismarck wishes to go to Egypt: can go to no European country: fears newspapers about Egypt. Malet has told him that we should have no objection, and wishes me to telegraph the same. I have doubts.'

The same day he explained his views more fully by letter on the situation which might be created by the personal appearance of the Chancellor on the banks of the Nile.

'As to "Bismarck in Egypt" [he wrote to Mr. Gladstone], I will not tell Malet to withdraw his permission. It would be ungracious to do so. But on reflection, I prefer not giving any further encouragement to it. It would be very inconvenient. His mere presence would be a counterpoise to Baring and the British army. The Khédive and Nubar would be at his feet, and his own impressions of what we were doing there would not be improved by all the European colonists would tell him.'[1]

The suggestion, Mr. Gladstone agreed, was 'inconvenient.' Nevertheless, it might be discourteous to put difficulties in the way, and he did not precisely see how we were 'to get out of it:'[2] also, if the reasons for the choice of a winter residence by the Prince were made clearly known, less harm might arise, and an opportunity might be seized for a final settlement of the Egyptian question. Still, he did not desire to encourage the journey, if it could be prevented without seeming to put an affront on the Prince.

The more, however, the idea was considered, the more awkward it appeared, especially as the financial negotiations relating to the Egyptian debt were still pending. Therein, however, lay a bridge of escape. 'Might not Malet,' Mr. Gladstone ingeniously inquired, 'of his own accord point out

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 26, 1884.
[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 28, 1884.

to Bismarck that his suggestion of course was founded on the belief in a settlement previously?'[1] By some such qualification of his offer, aided by the obvious inconvenience to Prince Bismarck himself of absence from his post, the proposal eventually was put aside. But if diplomacy rejoiced that the journey never got beyond the stage of 'an allegory on the banks of the Nile,' the world may regret that history was not allowed to make one more addition to the list of famous men who staked their reputation on an expedition to Egypt.

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 28, 1884.

# CHAPTER XI

## GENERAL GORDON

## 1884–1885

At non in Phariâ manes jacuere favillâ.—*Lucan*

THE great struggle in the Cabinet over the question of the franchise and the redistribution of seats had, as already seen, been settled, but the wisdom of the opinion of Lord Hartington that franchise and redistribution ought to have been simultaneously dealt with was quickly shown when the Franchise Bill reached the House of Lords. Lord Kimberley had it in charge. The majority immediately seized their opportunity and refused to proceed with the discussion until they were informed of the exact character of the redistribution which was to follow. To do anything else would, Lord Salisbury was stated to have said, be to discuss Redistribution 'with a rope round his neck.'[1] The whole of the autumn recess was spent in negotiations—in which the Queen played the part of counsellor and adviser—to bring the leaders of the two parties together over a point obviously not of sufficient importance to warrant a crisis, though it had been allowed well-nigh to break up the party, and to cause a collision between the two Houses. Both parties were in agreement that the franchise was to be extended, and also that there was to be a redistribution of

[1] A stormy scene occurred in the House of Lords on July 11, 1884, owing to Mr. Gladstone, in a speech to a party gathering at the Foreign Office, having alluded to the above expression as having actually been used by Lord Salisbury. This Lord Salisbury denied. At the close of his protest, Lord Granville and Lord Cairns rose together. Neither would give way, and each, cheered on by his excited supporters, continued to hold the floor. The absence of a Speaker in the House of Lords made itself felt. Eventually Lord Cork moved that Lord Granville be heard, and Lord Beauchamp that Earl Cairns be heard. The vote gave Lord Granville a majority of one: 27 to 26. *Hansard*, ccxc. 796.

seats. The differences between them were limited to the exact time at which the latter measure was to arrive in Parliament, and to the details of the disfranchisement and enfranchisement schedules. In the negotiations which eventually led to an agreement and to a conference, the unusual spectacle was presented of the leaders of the two opposite parties meeting in conclave to settle the main features of a Bill to be presented to Parliament. In this conference Lord Granville took part; but he purposely abstained from interfering in regard to the details. These he considered were questions essentially affecting the House of Commons alone, and as to which the leader of the Lords was entitled to play only a secondary *rôle*. Thus did the great measure—the last but not the least of the legislative achievements of Mr. Gladstone—eventually find its place among the pages of the Statute Book. But although the danger of a collision between the two Houses was averted, grave complications were still threatening the existence of the Liberal Government in 1885. The good understanding with Germany was impaired; in France the hostile Ministry of M. Ferry was still in office; and the question of Egyptian finance was still unsettled. There were constant resignations and threats of resignation on the part of ministers. Lord Palmerston was said to have once pointed to a table drawer and said he reserved it exclusively for Mr. Gladstone's numerous letters of resignation. In 1884 Mr. Gladstone would have found more than one table drawer quite insufficient for the letters in which one or other of his colleagues was constantly conveying to him his intended retirement from public life or from office. If the Ministry continued to exist at all, it was mainly owing to the personal exertions of Lord Granville. Even he at times despaired, and before the winter was over he was himself to have occasion to tender his resignation.

Under ordinary circumstances the results of the mission of Lord Northbrook to Cairo would have been riveting public attention; but at the end of 1884 the nation was intent on one subject, and on one subject only. The position of General Gordon at Khartoum, his reasons for having re-

mained there, and his chances of escape from the beleaguered fortress, were the all-absorbing topic of the hour, beside which every other question paled and sank into comparative insignificance.

'Do you see any objection to using Gordon in some way? [Lord Granville had written to Mr. Gladstone on November 27, 1883]. He has an immense name in Egypt—he is popular at home. He is a strong but very sensible opponent of slavery. He has a small bee in his bonnet. If you do not object, I could consult Baring by telegraph.'

For some time before this letter was actually written, the idea had been entertained of employing two English officers of distinction in Egypt in the native service; and in this connection the names of General Gordon and Sir Charles Wilson had both been mentioned. But in 1882 Sir E. Malet had informed Lord Granville that the Egyptian Government would not employ General Gordon in the Soudan unless it was demanded of them, and that General Gordon himself was believed to object to the idea of re-entering the Egyptian service. On December 1, 1883, having obtained Mr. Gladstone's concurrence, Lord Granville had telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring to know whether General Gordon, if he were willing to go, would be of use to the Egyptian Government, and if so, in what capacity. Sir Evelyn Baring replied that the Egyptian Government were still strongly adverse to employing General Gordon, chiefly on the ground that the movement in the Soudan was religious, and that a Christian in high command would probably alienate the faithful tribes. Sir Evelyn Baring advised that the Egyptian Government should not be pressed.

On January 10, 1884, subsequently to the defeat of Hicks Pasha, Lord Granville telegraphed to Sir Evelyn Baring:—

'Would Gordon or Wilson under altered circumstances be of any use in Egypt?'

Sir Evelyn Baring consulted the Prime Minister, Nubar Pasha, and their opinion was that neither General Gordon nor Sir Charles Wilson could be utilised at the moment in Egypt. On January 15, however, Lord Hartington and

Lord Granville were informed on reliable authority that General Gordon was not desirous to go to the Soudan, yet that he would go if asked by her Majesty's Government to do so. Lord Granville at once telegraphed this to Sir Evelyn Baring, who, referring to this question and to a telegram which he had sent asking for a qualified officer to go to Khartoum, now expressed a favourable opinion.[1] It will thus be seen that the mission of General Gordon was not, as some have supposed, suddenly forced on an unwilling Government in 1884 by public opinion. In December 1883 the Cabinet had itself suggested his employment, but the idea was not received with favour either by the Egyptian Government or by Sir Evelyn Baring; nor did General Gordon himself, in reply to the inquiries that were made, show any desire to return to the post in the Soudan from which in 1879 he had deliberately retired. The vast scheme connected with the enterprise of the King of the Belgians in the Congo had entranced his imagination, and at the time of the disaster to the army of Hicks Pasha he was still intent on joining in it. If ever he returned to the scene of his former exploits he intended that it should be not by way of the Nile from the north, but from the west, over the hitherto unexplored division between the waters of the Congo and those of the great river of Egypt. The further inquiry made by Lord Granville in January 1884 and quoted above produced the same reply as the earlier message. Shortly afterwards, however, Lord Wolseley met General Gordon, then on his way to Brussels, and discussed the situation in Egypt with him. Having asked the General what under the circumstances of the hour he would do, Lord Wolseley received the reply, 'I would send myself.' The brief conversation suggested that General Gordon, stirred by the thought of the threatened collapse of the edifice which he had helped to raise, through the very dangers which he had foreseen, and believing that he alone was the man of the situation, was prepared to cancel his existing engagements and to return to the Soudan.

[1] Notes by Lord Granville of the events connected with the despatch of General Gordon to Egypt.

General Gordon now returned from Brussels at the request of the Government, and on January 18, 1884, after an interview at the War Office with four Cabinet Ministers then in London and Lord Wolseley, he left for Egypt. At the station Lord Granville took his ticket. The four Cabinet Ministers present at the interview were Lord Hartington, Lord Granville, Lord Northbrook, and Sir Charles Dilke. Mr. Gladstone telegraphed from Hawarden his concurrence in the proceedings.[1] With General Gordon there went Colonel Stewart, a distinguished officer, already well acquainted with the Soudan.

General Gordon's commission from the British Government and his instructions, which he revised himself, directed him to make the removal of the garrisons his immediate and principal care, and to report upon the best means of doing this. On his arrival in Egypt, his commission, after a consultation with Nubar Pasha, the Prime Minister, and Sir Evelyn Baring, was modified from one of a merely advisory character into an executive commission, and he further accepted a separate commission as Governor-General of the Soudan from the Khédive. Both these steps were taken with the approval of the Government at home;[2] but a calm judgment will not deny that the terms of the original commission and of the commission as Governor-General were difficult to reconcile altogether with each other; that the latter were of dangerous latitude, and that to these ambiguities most of the subsequent trouble is to be traced. General Gordon at the same time altered the plan of journey which he had formed before leaving England. His original intention had been to make his way if necessary into Khartoum by Suakim and Berber. He now decided to travel by the Nile and the Desert route, and moving with great rapidity he reached

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, January 19, 1884.

[2] The original instructions to General Gordon said: 'You will consider yourself authorized and instructed to perform such other duties as the Egyptian Government may desire to confide to you and as may be communicated to you by Sir E. Baring.' Lord Granville to General Gordon, January 18, 1884. (*Egypt*, No. 2, 1884.) See, too, the *Journals* of General Gordon, edited by Mr. A. Egmont Hake (ed. 1885), Introduction, p. xxiii.

Khartoum on February 18, just a month after he had left London.

While on the way between London and Egypt, General Gordon penned a paper of suggestions for the information of the Cabinet, the terms of which in some respects greatly disturbed the minds of some of those who read it, as the main proposal which it contained, to hand over the Soudan to the government of the petty Sultans who had formerly ruled there or their representatives, if such could be found, seemed fantastic in the extreme. Nor were these apprehensions diminished by rumours of some of his utterances and conduct on the journey to Khartoum in the company of Colonel Stewart, which seemed entirely inconsistent with the idea of the mission as defined by the Government, and suggested ulterior trouble. To all such criticisms, however, the reply was that General Gordon had clearly accepted the policy of evacuation and the abandonment of the Soudan.

'I think H.M. Government [his words were] are fully justified in recommending the evacuation, inasmuch as the sacrifices necessary towards securing a good government would be far too onerous to admit of any such attempt being made. Indeed, one may say it is impracticable at any cost. H.M. Government will now leave them as God has placed them.' [1]

Although only four ministers were present at the interview of January 18, the mission of General Gordon cannot be considered to have been their act alone, though a special responsibility may be said to attach to them as the sponsors of the idea. The Prime Minister must bear a share of the responsibility for this, as for every act of first-rate importance done by the Government of which he was the head, nor did he ever attempt to evade it. The efforts which were made to dissociate him from responsibility because he was not personally present at the meeting of January 18 were never countenanced by Mr. Gladstone himself. 'We agree,' Lord Granville subsequently wrote, 'that a majority of the Cabinet were not morally responsible for sending out

[1] January 22, 1884, on board the steamship *Tanjore*.

Gordon.'[1] Those who had the moral responsibility included both Mr. Gladstone and Lord Granville and some who were not ministers at all.

It is not disputed by the biographers of General Gordon that, once arrived at Khartoum, he either forgot or deliberately put aside his instructions. The policy which he gradually adopted, under the charm of old recollections, was to establish a settled Government in the Soudan and to remain there until that task was accomplished. The suggestions which he made for bringing in 10,000 Turkish troops *viâ* Berber and Suakim, and for the employment of Zebehr Pasha, the proposal to Sir Samuel Baker to enlist troops privately, and his own early attempts at negotiations with the Mahdi, were all practical expressions of this determination. He had begun by underrating the power of the Mahdi; but he soon wrote that, 'if Egypt is to be quiet the Mahdi must be smashed up,' and he determined with characteristic energy to do it himself. Whether his views were correct or incorrect, wise or unwise, is beside the question; it cannot be disputed that they were the opposite of his original instructions. As soon as Lord Granville became convinced that this was so, he made a proposal to the Cabinet to recall the General at once; and he afterwards regretted that he had not pressed this proposal more strongly.

When the Government became fully aware that their envoy was disregarding their orders and inaugurating a policy of his own, they would have been fully justified in recalling him and in telling him definitely that if he remained any longer at Khartoum, he did so at his own peril. But the Government did not adopt this course; and the question therefore arose what were their obligations to him when communications with him became more and more hazardous, and there seemed to be good reason for supposing that he might be cut off by the hordes of the Mahdi and be placed in personal danger himself. His early messages and suggestions were puzzling and ambiguous, and after the end of May

[1] To Mr. Gladstone, March 18, 1888.

the telegraph line was destroyed, and communications with him became difficult and uncertain.

'News from Egypt does not improve [Lord Granville wrote in March to Mr. Gladstone, who was at Coombe and unwell]. I am not sure that for the ultimate result it is a bad thing that Gordon, who has provisions for six months, should be cut off from us. You will see that on the 8th he telegraphed (which ought to have been repeated to us) that he was ready to do with or without Zobeir. Our parliamentary position will be difficult.

'The ambassadors announced everywhere on Saturday that you had resigned, because the Cabinet tried to force you to take more energetic measures. They were convinced that your throat was merely diplomatic.' [1]

There were two views in the Cabinet. Some at a very early stage of these events considered that General Gordon —to use his own words—would be 'caught in Khartoum' even if he were not actually caught at the moment. Bearing in view the whole facts of the situation, they were of opinion that a relief expedition should be sent, especially as General Gordon considered that he had been prohibited by Sir Evelyn Baring from trying to retreat by the south, a line which, in his opinion, was still open to him.

'H.M.G. told me [the General wrote in his diary], or rather my friend Baring told me, I was not to leave Khartoum for the Equator till I had permission. I have his telegram, so that (if it were possible or if I would do it) if I did leave Khartoum, I should be acting against orders.' [2]

Others took the view that General Gordon had so entirely departed from his original orders and instructions that the Government were thereby relieved of responsibility. General Gordon, according to this view, had started with all gallantry on a mission sent to extricate the garrisons. He had chosen to remain to carry out a policy of his own, and British blood and treasure were not to be poured out like water in order to rescue a soldier, however distinguished, from the consequences

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 20, 1884.

[2] Extract from Gordon's Journals, March 21, 1885. Copy among Lord Granville's papers.

of deliberate disobedience to the orders which he had received. Against this view it was argued in some quarters that General Gordon was in the position of a man commanding a forlorn hope; and that therefore it was the duty of the Government to send an expedition to succour him. Lord Granville denied both the justice of the comparison and the accuracy of the conclusion which was sought to be drawn from it. Lord Salisbury on one occasion pressed the argument in the House of Lords.

'The noble Marquis [Lord Granville replied] said that General Gordon had gone out as a forlorn hope. That is not the case. If it had been the case I am not quite sure that it would strengthen the argument. In warfare when a number of men volunteer for a forlorn hope, and go perhaps to attack a fort with a hundred chances to one that they will lose their lives or be taken prisoners, there is no obligation in honour on the commander of the army to risk any more lives in saving that forlorn hope.' [1]

It was in any case not by such analogies that the question could be settled either way. General Gordon had very early in the day asked that his old antagonist Zebehr Pasha should be sent out to succeed him as Governor. Zebehr's son Suleiman Pasha had been shot by General Gordon's orders for complicity in the slave trade and slave raiding for which his father was notorious. General Gordon argued with great force that if the Soudan were to be evacuated, slave holding was in any case certain to revive, and that on the other hand it was not to be denied that Zebehr was a man of great tenacity of purpose, who was well able to govern the country and to withstand the Mahdi. A loud and angry protest, however, arose in England against relying on such aid, and Mr. W. E. Forster made himself the mouthpiece of this protest in Parliament. Mr. Gladstone favoured the idea of meeting General Gordon's wishes. So at first did Lord Granville, but the opposition in the Cabinet was strong, and out of doors and in Parliament it quickly ripened into a storm.

[1] February 27, 1885. *Hansard*, vol. ccxciv. p. 1582. See too *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 156.

'Had my views about Zebehr prevailed [Mr. Gladstone afterwards wrote to Lord Granville], it would not have removed our difficulties, as Forster would certainly have moved, and with the Tories and the Irish have carried, a condemnatory Address.' [1]

So the proposal had to be abandoned, though Mr. Gladstone believed, and told Lord Granville so, that if at the moment he had not been pinned to his bed by sickness he would have known how 'to force the proposal down the throats' of his reluctant colleagues. With his usual power of going to the heart of a situation, he had quickly recognised that in this proposal was contained the pith of the case: a view which the publication of General Gordon's Diaries has confirmed.

Lord Granville wished to propose that a message definitely recalling General Gordon should be sent out to him and the discussions as to the policy of a relief expedition continued. Unfortunately if the statesmen differed as to the policy the generals were as much at variance over the plans. Ultimately the view prevailed that if General Gordon 'was to be helped by a British force being sent to Khartoum, it could be done under more favourable circumstances when the Nile rose;' [2] but no definite decision to send an expedition was taken. In this the responsibility of the Cabinet was undivided. Meanwhile, an expedition was sent under General Graham to clear the neighbourhood of Suakim of the rebel bands of Osman Digna. Lord Granville was strongly averse to an expedition to Khartoum if it could be avoided. 'The Queen,' he said, 'should ask the Empress Eugénie whether she now thinks she was right in urging her husband to undertake the Mexican as well as the Franco-German war.' [3] And undoubtedly a plunge into the desert bore a disagreeable resemblance to the famous expedition which had disorganised the French army and ruined the Empire. By the end of April, notwithstanding the moral effect of General Graham's success near Suakim, it began

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, March 28, 1884.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 25, 1884.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, February 9, 1884.

to be feared that Khartoum was isolated by the mounting wave of the Mahdist insurrection, even if it were not actually besieged. This was the opinion of Sir Evelyn Baring, who had been summoned to England.[1] Mr. Gladstone, however, did not believe that General Gordon was really cut off or even in serious personal peril. This unwillingness on his part to be persuaded of the danger, caused an inquiry to be addressed at his suggestion by Lord Granville in a telegram of April 23, and in the instructions sent to Mr. Egerton—then representing Sir Evelyn Baring in Egypt—on May 17, asking for a definite statement, to which Mr. Gladstone believed a reply could be got, from General Gordon as to whether he could or could not make his way out, and if he remained to state his reason.[2]

Lord Granville seems, on the contrary, to have been more disposed than Mr. Gladstone to admit the danger, but to have been unwilling lightly to admit the obligation to send an expedition after General Gordon had as he considered disobeyed his instructions. He had also great doubts, although messages were getting through, if an expedition could arrive in time,[3] because the arrival of an expedition would get known, and it was probable that the Mahdi was like a cat playing with a mouse. Nevertheless an expedition might after all succeed, and with his usual optimism he believed that it would succeed even if the probabilities seemed the other way.

The struggle between the two sections of the Cabinet, at variance, it must be remembered, on other subjects also, lasted all through May and June. On May 26 Berber fell

[1] '. . . Sir Evelyn Baring was here yesterday, and I asked him whether in his opinion Gordon could have escaped from Khartoum. He said that he did not think it was possible except just at the first—that he had thought, as I knew, that the Government were wrong not to agree to Gordon's request about Zobeir, but that when they refused it there were but two alternatives—either to give Gordon up altogether, or to send an expedition—and that when he was in England (April, May, June 1884) he had fully explained this.' (Sir Thomas Sanderson to Lord Granville, December 8, 1885.) See also on this subject *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 163.

[2] *Egypt*, No. 32, p. 103.

[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 15, 1888.

into the hands of the Mahdi, and the advance of an expedition from Suakim was thereby rendered almost impossible. In the middle of July matters were at length brought to a head by the Secretary of State for War, Lord Hartington.

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*July* 15, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I enclose the result of our deliberations to-day.

'I hope there may be a Cabinet to-morrow or very soon to decide on this.

'At the last Cabinet when it was mentioned, summoned, as I hoped, to decide on it, I got five minutes at the fag end, and was as usual put off.

'Another fortnight has passed, and the end of the session is approaching. I cannot be responsible for the military policy in Egypt under such conditions. 'Yours, HARTINGTON.'

*Memo. by Lord Hartington respecting military policy in Egypt, accompanying the above letter.*

'I have had a long conversation to-day with Lord Northbrook, Sir E. Baring, and Lord Wolseley on this and other questions of the military position in Egypt.

'The conclusion at which I think we unanimously arrived is that it is impossible to come to a decision on the question of the instructions to be given about Dongola or any of the other pending military questions, until the Cabinet will decide whether or not an expedition is to be undertaken to bring away General Gordon and the Egyptian garrison from Khartoum. There is I consider now no reason for further delay in deciding on this point. It is now more than three months since we have had any message from General Gordon. The last messages despatched to him left Cairo on May 21, Korosko on June 5, and about June 26 were allowed to pass through the rebel lines at Abu Ahmed. The periods which have elapsed since these dates are 55, 40, and 19 days respectively. But there is little hope that news can now be received direct from General Gordon. It is not to be supposed that if there were any possibility of sending a message out of Khartoum, General Gordon, Colonel Stewart, and Mr. Power would have omitted to avail themselves of it. It is to be feared that this silence points to a close investment of Khartoum and probably to an investment by a more fanatical enemy than had been anticipated; for I believe that this

impossibility of transmitting a message is almost unprecedented in the East.

'So far, therefore, as we can judge, it appears that the possibility, even if he were willing to avail himself of it, of peacefully with drawing from Khartoum, is not open to General Gordon; and the Cabinet must decide whether he is to be left to his fate or to be rescued by force.

'The delay in deciding on any action on the Suakim-Berber route has been so great, that the conditions of the problem have been materially changed since the proposal to operate on that line and by means of a railway was first put forward. The railway could only now be constructed within the cool season for a very short portion of the distance. Osman Digna has again collected a considerable force near Suakim, and Berber is probably in the hands of the rebels. We must calculate on having to fight one or more severe battles at each end of the route, and at Berber we shall have to fight under considerable difficulties, as the desert which extends for the last hundred miles can only be crossed by troops in small detachments.

'Further, the alarm which has been caused by the report of the advance of the rebellion has necessitated the despatch of a considerable force, British and Egyptian, up the Nile to Assouan, Korosko, and Wady Halfa; and more troops are asked for. A movement by Suakim and Berber will now do little to protect or tranquillise Upper Egypt.

'On the other hand a movement by the Nile to Khartoum or to whatever point might be necessary to secure the retreat of General Gordon would incidentally completely protect Upper Egypt.

'Notwithstanding all the difficulties of the river route, Lord Wolseley is confident that a force of 6,000 or 7,000 men collected at Wady Halfa on October 1 could reach Khartoum in three months. I should not like to commit myself to this estimate; but I have little doubt that the operation is practicable, and at the period we have reached it appears on the whole to offer the most advantages. If this operation were decided on, it would be worth while to make every effort to keep Dongola out of the hands of the rebels; if not, I agree with Lord Northbrook and Sir E. Baring that it should be made clear to the Egyptian Government that it should be absolutely abandoned.

'But the first and indispensable condition of forming any opinion on any of the military questions in Egypt is a decision whether Gordon is to be rescued or abandoned, and I submit that there is no reason for any further delay in coming to a decision on this. 'H.'

*July* 15, 1884.

It was at length decided, before July was over, to send an expedition as far as Dongola, with the general intention of marching on Khartoum, unless in the interval General Gordon had been extricated by other means, or had extricated himself. To this hope Mr. Gladstone still adhered, and he and Lord Granville both objected to any definite pledge being given to Parliament to send an expedition to Khartoum, though foreseeing the probable necessity. Lord Granville considered it clear that General Gordon 'had the messages, and did not choose to answer them.' 'Our position,' he added, 'is not satisfactory.'[1] This was but too clear. Lord Hartington was of opinion that whether General Gordon had the messages or not—and he too complained of the difficulty of putting any clear construction on General Gordon's own messages—the expedition must go forward at once at least as far as Dongola.

Mr. Gladstone was as anxious as any member of his Government to see General Gordon clear of Khartoum, but was still convinced that the difficulty of the situation lay not so much in any material impossibility of the General himself escaping, as in his determination, heroic but unwise, to remain. He wished every facility to be given to General Gordon to get away by the south if he could do so, whatever Sir Evelyn Baring might have said on the subject, as to which there seemed some difference of opinion;[2] and with his customary pertinacity he had not abandoned the idea of sending out Zebehr Pasha to succeed General Gordon as governor, whatever might be said or done by Mr. W. E. Forster and his friends in Parliament.

In the month of June an article appeared in the *Contemporary Review* by an admirer of General Gordon. It summed up the situation in the following words :—

'You may do what you like with him: he would not withdraw. It is not at all a matter of rescuing General Gordon. He was in far more danger at the siege of Sebastopol—far more danger when he rode into a camp of 3,000 slave dealers, and told them to lay down

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, August 18, 1884.
[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, March 21, 1885.

their arms. He could leave to-morrow if he were minded; but he will not desert those who have been faithful to him.' [1]

Communications were at this time constantly passing with members of General Gordon's family in England.

MR. GLADSTONE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

10 DOWNING STREET, WHITEHALL, *July* 22, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I have seen Sir Henry Gordon, who has spoken very freely to me. He will send me a memorandum of his views. Meanwhile I think I am not wrong in saying :—

'1. He adheres to the article in the *Contemporary* of June.

'2. He is certain that, expedition or no expedition, General Gordon will not come away without leaving behind some person or power representative of him in this sense, that he shall be a governing force in Khartoum.

'3. General Gordon considers himself bound not to the Egyptian soldiers only (of whom there are now extremely few), but to the trading population.

'4. The Nile is impossible for an expedition. Suakim and Berber the only route.

'5. General Gordon could go southward any day he pleased.

'6. The only satisfactory solution is *to send Zebehr*. He has come round to this opinion, having originally been opposed to it.

'Ever yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.

'P.S.—7. Something ought to be done soon.

'8. An English expedition to Khartoum would not convey what Gordon wants, and would simply have to remain there.'

On July 24 the following telegram had been sent to Mr. Egerton, practically repeating the message of April 25 for transmission to General Gordon :—

'Her Majesty's Government continue to be anxious to learn from himself his views and position, so that if danger has arisen or is likely to arise in the manner they have described, they may be in a position to take measures accordingly.'

[1] *Contemporary Review*, vol. 43, p. 878, June 1884. The article was anonymous. It takes the shape of an imaginary dialogue between a critic and an admirer of General Gordon. The passage quoted above is the final view of the latter.

Upon these views Lord Wolseley commented as follows in a letter to the Duke of Cambridge, a copy of which he forwarded to Lord Granville.

LORD WOLSELEY TO THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE.

*Sunday evening, July* 27, 1884.

'SIR,—I find in a telegram from General Gordon, dated March 28 last, he says he has only 1,400 rounds of Krupp ammunition. If he has fired away 10 rounds a day since then, he can now have only 200 rounds left, which at the rate of 10 rounds per diem will be all expended on August 17 (proximo).

'What is to become of him after that?

'All his expeditions up and down the river in steamers depend for success upon his being able to shell the enemy's position.

'The only pull he has over those who surround him in Khartoum is the advantage he derives from his Krupp guns, but this advantage ceases when his gun ammunition is expended.

'I need scarcely add, that he cannot make shells in Khartoum, even if he had the powder required to use them. That Gordon will either have his throat cut, or fall into the Mahdi's hands when he runs short of gun and musket ammunition, may be looked upon as a certainty.

'If the former, in what position will the Government stand? If the latter, we shall have another costly Abyssinian expedition on our hands, for no Government would be strong enough to resist the cry there would then be for our army to go out to bring him back. A small cheap expedition *now*, perhaps only as far as Dongola, would avert these impending misfortunes.

'I have, &c.

'WOLSELEY.'

Before the House rose a pledge that an expedition should go to Khartoum if necessary was given, and the necessary money votes were taken. Careful preparations had been made for some weeks previously in order to provide for every contingency, both as to the troops to be sent and the line of advance to be followed.[1] Of the two rival routes under consideration the Nile route was advocated by Lord Wolseley, who in August received the command. It had from the

[1] See on this subject more especially Lord Northbrook's speech in the House of Lords, February 26, 1885. *Hansard*, vol. ccxciv. p. 1338.

first been approved by Lord Hartington. The expedition was to move to Dongola and then go forward according to circumstances. A dash across the Bayuda Desert by a small but carefully organised force also had advocates. Among these was Major Kitchener, but it was deemed not to afford sufficient probabilities of success compared with the immense risks which such a force would have to incur and the consequent danger of failure.

Having decided to move, the Secretary of State for War threw himself into the preparations for the relief expedition with the utmost vigour.

'Mr. Gladstone [he wrote on the 22nd of August] wants me to consult him before deciding on the advance of the detachment to Dongola about which I wrote to you. This is a pleasant way of doing business when hours may be important. As you are within reasonable distance and sometimes answer a letter by return of post, I spare you the cypher. I hope you will all agree. I am very uneasy about the cross-purposes we are at. The plan which we have adopted, on which our preparations here are based *in case an expedition should be ordered*, is Wolseley's. Stephenson and the people in Egypt say it is impracticable, and go hammering on at their own plan. We don't deny that they can get to Dongola by their plan, but we say that it is doubtful whether they can get back again even from Dongola this winter, and that if we should be forced to go to Khartoum, it is certain that they could not get there and back again during the winter. Wolseley and his Red River men are confident that the boat plan *is* practicable. At all events we are committed to it, so far as preparations go. I am sorry for Stephenson, but it is not fair either to Wolseley who has proposed, to me who have adopted, or to Stephenson who has to execute the operation, that it should be entrusted to men who do not believe in it rather than to those who do.

'The only objection I can think of is that the appointment of Wolseley, "our only General," to command in Egypt will be taken as committing us to an expedition. It may be so understood here—perhaps in Egypt—but it will not really be so. He feels no doubt strongly our obligations towards Gordon, but the decision whether the expedition is to go or not will ultimately depend on the political, not the military, authorities. Nor does Wolseley in the least want an expedition, if we can get Gordon out without one. He has nothing more to get, he sees immense difficulties in it, and not much

probable honour and glory in the fighting line. Men who have got their reputation to make are much more likely to be keen on an expedition than he is.

'But it is for the efficiency of the preparations which we are making and for the success of the expedition, *if it should be necessary*, that I am most anxious about this appointment. We are obliged now to give every order from here, and we shall probably have to continue to do it; we cannot conduct this sort of business in Egypt properly from home, and we shall probably fail if we try to do so. If Wolseley goes to Egypt, he will be in the proper place to superintend the preparations for his own plan, and will be responsible for its success or failure.'

On August 28 messengers reached Old Dongola with five letters from General Gordon, the purport of which was that he was well and could hold out for four months. There was an uncertainty as to the exact date of these letters, but Major Kitchener, in whose possession they were, explained that three were dated July 13, and that General Gordon's meaning was that he could hold out till November 13.[1]

On September 20 a telegram was received at Cairo undated, addressed to the Egyptian Government and to Sir E. Baring. This was a reply to the telegram of April 23, which reached General Gordon on May 5. In this telegram General Gordon said :—

'I now inform you that to-day my soldiers have killed Ibrahim, son of Sheikh-el-Obeid, and slain his followers to the north of Khartoum. I also hope to overthrow the rebels to the west of Khartoum, and then there will be no Arabs left in our vicinity. I heard that the Mahdi was coming here; but he has not yet come. Senaar and Khartoum are all right. We have provisions for five months.'

On the same day a telegram reached the Khédive's Privy Seal announcing the intended withdrawal to Khartoum of an Egyptian battalion at Sennaar and again pressing for Turkish assistance to suppress the Mahdi.[2]

[1] Mr. Egerton to Lord Granville, August 29, 30 (*Egypt*, 1884, No. 35, p. 65).
[2] Sir E. Baring to Lord Granville, September 20 (*Egypt*, 1884, No. 35, p. 98).

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

NEWMARKET, *September* 24, 1884.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I have read Gordon's telegrams again, and I confess that I am utterly unable to understand them. I can neither accept Mr. Gladstone's paraphrase nor can I supply any other.

'I think that all we can do is to look at the position as it is known to us from other sources, and to pay no attention to what he says. We have no proof that he could have done anything different from what he has done and is doing, or that he has wilfully disobeyed or disregarded our instructions. We know that the despatch of the Egyptian employés, invalids, women, &c., from Khartoum was followed by the rising of the country between Khartoum and Berber, and by the attack on and fall of Berber. It is not probable that since those events he could have left Khartoum without sacrificing the lives of himself and those who followed him and also of those whom he left behind. He had no alternative but to hold on at Khartoum and to keep the insurgents at bay. We have no knowledge that even now he could make any movement of retreat without bringing down the tribes upon him and on the garrison.

'I think therefore that our troops must go on to Dongola at least, and if possible get into free communication with Gordon and Stewart, who we may hope is still sane. Whether they will have to go beyond Dongola or to Khartoum itself, I do not think it is possible to say now.

'If we are not in a position to say to him (as I do not think we are now), "You must come away from Khartoum with the garrison and inhabitants who want to come with you," I see no use in giving him further general and vague instructions. Neither do I think that we can attempt to limit his action strictly to Khartoum, disregarding the fate of all the other Egyptian garrisons in the Soudan. If it should hereafter appear that by allowing Gordon to remain somewhat longer at Khartoum and to follow up his successes, the whole of the Soudan might have been pacified or the garrisons peacefully withdrawn, and that this result has been prevented by our precipitate action, what excuse shall we have? I am sorry that I have not anything more definite to suggest, but the long and the short of it is that I would not give any order in a hurry, or till we can give them, through Wolseley, a British officer at Dongola with a British force; and that I would ask, as I wrote yesterday, for a full report of the opinions and advice of our officers in Egypt.

'Yours,

'HARTINGTON.

'You know that Baring and Northbrook are as strong for evacuation of the Soudan as you can be, and are not like me infected with a weakness for its partial retention, and you can therefore trust their advice. 'H.'

All doubts as to the position at Khartoum were removed when early in October two letters dated the 30th and 31st of July were received from General Gordon. In the former he wrote :—

'I will conclude in saying we will defend ourselves to the last ; that I will not leave Khartoum ; that I will try and persuade all Europeans to escape ; and that I am still sanguine that, by some means not clear, God will give us an issue.' [1]

In the letter of the 31st he said :—

'I repeat I have no wish to retain this country. My sole desire is to restore the prestige of the Government in order to get out garrisons, and to put some ephemeral government in position in order to get away.'

The postscript to this letter also contained these words :—

'Reading over your telegram of May 5, 1884, you ask me "to state cause and intention in staying at Khartoum, knowing Government means to abandon Soudan ;" and in answer I say, "I stay at Khartoum because Arabs have shut us up and will not let us out. I also add that, even if the road was opened, the people would not let me go, unless I gave them some government or took them with me, which I could not do. No one would leave more willingly than I would, if it was possible.' [2]

By the time that these letters reached England it had been already decided that the expedition should start and that a diversion should also be made on the Red Sea Coast to keep Osman Digna engaged. It is possible to believe that deliberation was too long and decision too late, and yet to appreciate the responsibility of those who had hesitated,

[1] *Egypt*, 1884, No. 35, No. 166, p. 120. On September 25 five letters from General Gordon arrived at Massowah, three dated April 27 and the other two July 30 and 31, 1884. The full text of these letters did not reach the Foreign Office till October 15.

[2] Postscript to letter of July 31. *Egypt*, 1884 (No. 35), p. 134.

except on the clearest evidence of the necessity, to plunge a great military force into the heart of the African desert, when already the severest strain had been placed on the resources of the country by the previous expeditions to Egypt and the Red Sea coast, when clouds were visible on the horizon of Central Asia which before many months were to blacken the political sky with the danger of war with Russia, when relations with Germany had suddenly become bad, and Ireland was seething with discontent. A new expedition to the Soudan also carried with it the risk of having the reconquest of the Soudan as an inevitable result; the very contingency which it was wished to avoid. The common and vulgar indictment of the Government, that they sent General Gordon to the Soudan and then basely deserted him, will not bear historical investigation. The most accurate of General Gordon's biographers has also admitted that the Government, having once taken their decision to send a relief expedition, 'showed no niggard spirit in sanctioning the proposals of the military authorities.'[1] The only criticism which he permits to be made is that the expedition was too elaborate and far too anxiously prepared in order to make failure impossible, when a rapid if hazardous dash across the Bayuda Desert by a smaller force would have been more likely to succeed. Such questions, involving purely military considerations, are outside the scope of this narrative. It is only necessary to allude to them in order to say that these alternatives were all fully discussed—perhaps discussed too fully and with an insufficient realisation of the value of time. Khartoum fell, notwithstanding the elaborate precautions taken to make the expedition to relieve it a success. The word failure carries many consequences. Long before these events the strange and striking personality of General Gordon had obtained a well-marked place in the affections of his

[1] Boulger, *Life of Gordon*, p. 321. The last messages received from General Gordon were dated November 4, December 4, December 14, December 15. See *Egypt*, No. 1, 1885, pp. 96, 122, 151. After the middle of December nothing came through.

countrymen, and had struck the popular imagination. His exploits at Sebastopol and in China, his achievements in the Soudan were legendary. His imprisonment in Khartoum was the anxiety of a nation. That he perished is one of the great tragedies of history, and subsequent events have intensified rather than weakened the impression made at the moment of his death. Of the great soldier who long centuries before had perished on the Egyptian strand, it was said by 'the mournful poet of the declining days of the Roman Republic' that his spirit did not sink into the funeral pyre which consumed his body, but rose eternal. Neither did the memory of General Gordon perish in the horrors of the fall and sack of Khartoum. Therefore it is that, the man being of heroic stature, the Government through whose misfortune or fault he fell, will in this respect be one for which an impartial hearing will be difficult to obtain.

'I have felt great and deep regret, but no remorse [Lord Granville subsequently wrote to Mr. Gladstone], at being one principally responsible for sending out Gordon. Wolseley proposed it to Hartington; Hartington proposed it to me. We agreed that he should collect what Cabinet Ministers he could find in London to meet the next day. I wrote a short account of what was likely to be proposed, and you telegraphed your sanction. Hartington unluckily did not find out that Derby was in town. Only Northbrook came and Dilke. The latter had objected to any officer going, but agreed to Gordon. The next day I said to Hartington: "We were proud of ourselves yesterday. Are you sure that we did not commit a gigantic folly?" He mentioned this to me later as diminishing my responsibility, which of course it did not do in the least; and I still think it would have been indefensible to have refused Gordon's offer. His subsequent conduct made it most difficult how to *act*. I regret that I did not press more strongly my proposal to the Cabinet to recall him at once when he changed his policy. I am glad that I objected to the pledge we subsequently gave to promise an expedition to Khartoum.

'I am sure that Hartington would freely acknowledge that the main responsibility for sending out Gordon rests upon the four Cabinet Ministers who met in his room. But he would probably say that he was less morally open to reproval, if there was anything in it, than any of his colleagues, as he had pressed an earlier despatch of

the army of rescue. The sending out that army at all perhaps somewhat weakens our case. I cannot admit that either generals or statesmen, who have accepted the offer of a man to lead a forlorn hope, are in the least bound to risk the lives of thousands for the uncertain chance of saving the forlorn hope.' [1]

It was a misfortune that the presence of Lord Derby in London was not known on February 18, for his cautious mind would probably have led him to object to the whole plan as premature. It was a greater misfortune that Lord Kimberley was not in London. 'If he had known in time,' he afterwards said, he would have shown Gordon to be unfit for the work, 'for he knew him well,' and he believed that he could have stopped his being sent.[2] 'Clearly we made a mistake: great but greatly excusable,' Mr. Gladstone wrote in reply to the letter of Lord Granville quoted above, which he considered gave a perfectly accurate account of what had occurred. The cause was

'insufficient knowledge of our man, whom we rather took on trust from the public impressions, and from newspaper accounts which were probably not untrue, but so far from the whole truth that we were misled.

'The first sign of our difficulties was the affair of Zebehr, in which you may remember my fight against the Cabinet, I think the entire Cabinet, and my giving way only because I thought that our compliance would at once be followed by an Address from the House of Commons reversing it.

'There came the time when you thought Gordon should be recalled, and here I am responsible for having advised you not to press an opinion which it was plain the Cabinet would not adopt. But then it should be borne in mind that (if I remember right) we authorised him to remain, only if he saw or believed he saw his way to a reasonable settlement of the native government for the Soudan.

'It is now I think plain that he never, or never after his first few days, had any rational hope of that kind, and that he ought at a very early date to have come away of his own motion. He really remained in utter defiance of the whole mind and spirit of our instructions. I do not see what could have justified him, except (like Nelson at Trafalgar) a great success. To remain beleaguered in

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 11, 1888.

[2] Sir Robert Meade's notes.

Khartoum was only the proof of his failure. It was his absolute duty to withdraw if he could; and I have never heard his power to do so disputed. For us to have complied with his demands was madness and crime.

'In opposition to his demands, Hartington made one of the two admirable speeches by which his career of 1880–85 was distinguished. After that period he had more leaning to the despatch of troops than some of us had. My memory of the long and tangled course of subsequent correspondence is obscure. But I do not think he ever came to any sharp issue (like mine about Zebehr), rather that in the main he got what he wanted. I think with you that the real question is, "were we justified in sending when we did send?" I have not the smallest doubt that we were right in our refusals to fight against nature, whether up the Nile or from Suakim.

'In the long and complicated Egyptian business, we were for the most part, as I think, drawn on inevitably by a necessity of honour. It is a slight comfort to me to look back to my prophecy in the House of Commons, I think in 1876 at the time of the Cave Commission, as to the consequence of intermeddling with Egyptian finance. But we committed the error of sending Gordon; and I think another in landing at Suakim. For neither of these are we blamed as we ought to be.' [1]

When the fate of General Gordon became known, the first decision of the Government was to avenge his death by another expedition, in order, as the phrase of the day went, 'to smash the Mahdi at Khartoum.' But this decision had no sooner been taken than grave doubts began to be expressed, and fresh differences made themselves felt. The policy of separating responsibility for the affairs of the Soudan from the control of Egypt had on the whole been recognised as sound. The truest criticism on their conduct had been that the Government might have carried this negative decision originally a step further, and might have prohibited the march of General Hicks into the Soudan. It was now asked whether, since the immediate aim of the expedition, owing to the death of General Gordon, had become impossible, another and far more costly expedition was warranted merely in order to avenge him. In the

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, March 12, 1888.

Cabinet itself there was a division of opinion, and this division was coincident with divisions on other questions. Lord Northbrook, who had returned from his Egyptian mission, recommended in his report the amalgamation of the Daira and Domains Estates Loan with the Unified and Privileged Debts and the reform of the administration of the Estates. He wished also to add their receipts to the general revenue, and to make them security for a new loan of eight and a half millions to be issued under British guarantee at a reduced interest. Mr. Childers would have none of this, and he proposed a smaller loan with all kinds of Egyptian security for the interest. This security the French Government considered to be entirely insufficient. Mr. Gladstone was if possible even more hostile than Mr. Childers to Lord Northbrook's proposals. Lord Northbrook, he said, 'like Gordon went out to do one thing, and did another; and was never I think quite the same man after it.'[1] According to Mr. Childers he was indeed so shocked at the proposal made by Lord Northbrook to give a purely British guarantee to an Egyptian loan, 'that he did not see Northbrook for a week or ten days afterwards.'[2] All the Commoners in the Cabinet were against Lord Northbrook's proposals; Lord Granville and the other Peers were for it.[3] It was the old battle between single and international control.

Meanwhile the Porte, the consent of which as the Suzerain power was necessary to any settlement, made difficulties, and was using the customary weapon of the arsenal at Yildiz Kiosk—delay. It was suspected that in adopting this attitude the Sultan was receiving the support of Russia. As far back as April, Count Münster had warned Lord Granville that 'the Russians had been trying to persuade the Turks to turn against us respecting Egypt.'[4] Lord Ampthill had said that the Grand Duke of Baden told him the same thing,

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, September 10, 1884.
[2] Mr. Childers to Lord Granville, September 8, 1884.
[3] Sir Charles Dilke's notes.
[4] Lord Granville to Lord Dufferin, April 15, 1884.

on the authority of his brother-in-law the Grand Duke Michael. These fears were the more serious because the question of the Afghan boundary was again becoming a cause of apprehension.

The Cabinet at the moment was once more in the throes of possible dissolution, for, owing to Mr. Gladstone's rejection of his financial proposals, Lord Northbrook threatened to resign.

'If he does [Lord Granville wrote], the last thing Hartington wrote to me on the subject was that he should be bound to go with him in consequence of the advice he had given when Northbrook accepted the mission.'[1]

Meanwhile Lord Northbrook was asking, 'Can nothing be done to prevent Hartington resigning?'[2] 'I own I do not see my way,' Lord Granville—who, as usual, was the father confessor of all Cabinet differences—wrote the day after Christmas to Mr. Gladstone, 'I never knew such an imbroglio.'[3] Complaints were also made that Mr. Chamberlain had used a great meeting at Birmingham to overcome the opinions of those who had disagreed with him on home questions in the Cabinet; and if, as was foreseen, it was found necessary for Mr. Gladstone to go abroad for the sake of his health, who, it was being inquired, was to control the member for Birmingham?

'I wrote to Chamberlain before his speech [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone], asking for caution in what he said on foreign affairs, and I had nothing to complain of. I intended raising the question of his home utterances, if he had been present at the Cabinet, not as a complaint of his holding opinions from which I might partially or wholly differ, but of his action as a member of the Cabinet.'[4]

The Cabinet at this time was, in fact, in a state of 'constant commotion and division, and in a chronic condition of

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, 1885.

[2] Lord Northbrook to Lord Granville. Memorandum of January 1885 relating to the military occupation of Egypt.

[3] December 26, 1884.

[4] February 1, 1885.

resignation.'[1] 'There was an immense crisis on Tuesday,' Lord Granville wrote on January 22, 1885, to Lord Spencer,[2] and Mr. Gladstone declared to Lord Granville that as soon as the Redistribution Bill had received the Royal assent, and the Egyptian finances had been put on a sound basis, he would carry out his long projected plan of finally retiring from the Premiership.[3]

'I am not at all easy about the state of matters generally [Lord Derby wrote from Knowsley]. The Egyptian difficulty, political and military, is increasing upon us, and if Gladstone withdrew, I hardly see how we should keep together upon it. If we did, it must be on the basis of some distinct understanding as to what our line of policy should be. But worse may happen—if the Premier has to go abroad for a month, how can we consult with him? and how can we settle anything without him? It will be, though for a shorter time, a renewal of Lord Chatham's administration, when every minister did as he pleased, and of course they ended by quarrelling.'

Lord Derby's prudent mind foresaw the possibility of an altogether new political world, 'an unknown world: possibly a world which some of us will not care to explore.' Sir Robert Morier was at Knowsley, 'as usual, full of useful and curious information.' He had got a fixed idea that the Russians would be at Herat within the next six months, saying that he was sure of his authority. Lord Derby consoled himself with the reflection 'that it would settle our affair, whatever else came of it.' He was not disposed, however, to believe in an attack on Herat; but there was force in Sir Robert Morier's argument that 'if the Russians meant to advance on the Afghan frontier, now was their time, while "we have Egypt on hand and an army locked up in Africa."'[4] Lord Derby gauged the situation accurately, and at the moment when the discord in the Cabinet was at its worst, the question of the Afghan boundary entered upon an acute phase. It at once compelled an abandonment of the idea of

[1] Sir Edward Russell, *That Reminds Me*, p. 93.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, January 22, 1885.
[3] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, January 27, 1885.
[4] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, January 5, 1885.

another plunge into the deserts of Africa; nor was it a misfortune that it also forced the Cabinet to realise that they must either resign in a body, or hold together sinking minor issues and sweeping smaller questions out of the road, if affairs were to be carried to a successful issue in what promised to be one of the gravest crises yet known in the history of the country. But Lord Granville had to admit that 'no one but Gladstone could suggest any argument to defend ourselves for having promised to smash the Mahdi at Khartoum, if we now retire.' [1]

In July, 1880, the Ameer Abdurrahman had received in a letter from Sir Lepel Griffin a promise from the British Government in the following words: 'If any foreign Power should attempt to interfere in Afghanistan, and if such interference should lead to unprovoked aggression on the dominions of your Highness, in that event the British Government would be prepared to aid you to such extent and in such manner as may appear to the British Government necessary in repelling it, provided that your Highness follows unreservedly the advice of the British Government in regard to your external relations.' It was because a foreign Power was threatening interference with the dominions of the Ameer that a new departure had now to be taken, even at the cost of awkward explanations.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, April 12, 1885.

# CHAPTER XII

## RUSSIA AND GERMANY

### 1885

THAT the Governments of the independent Tartar Khanates were the scandal of Asia; that they had turned once flourishing regions into sand and desert; that their conquest by Russia had been a gain to civilisation; and that an armed collision between Russia and Great Britain in regard to the possession of the remaining territories which still intervened between the North-West frontier of India and the South-Eastern frontier of Russia would be a disaster, were conclusions at which the leading statesmen of both the great political parties in Great Britain had long since arrived. Successive Foreign Secretaries had not failed to understand the difficulties which a Power like Russia always experiences when brought into contact with weak neighbours. Such difficulties Great Britain had herself known in India, and knew them still. The memory of the tragic fate of two English officers, Stoddart and Conolly, at Bokhara, where in 1842 they had been done to death, was also still fresh; and reasonable men saw no cause for regret if the tribes of the remote regions of Central Asia experienced the fate which their misdeeds had long deserved.

'I have expressed my opinion [Lord Clarendon had written in 1869], that abstinence from aggression would on every account promote the true interests of Russia, whose territorial possessions needed no aggrandisement; and if the giving effect to this policy depended upon the Russian Government alone, I should not doubt it being maintained; but I was sure, judging from our own Indian experience, that such would not be the case, and that Russia would

find the same difficulty that England had experienced in controlling its own power, when exercised at so great a distance from the seat of Government as to make reference home almost a matter of impossibility. There was always some frontier to be improved, some broken engagement to be repaired, some faithless ally to be punished, and plausible reasons were seldom wanting for the acquisition of territory, which the Home Government never thought it expedient to reject, and could not therefore condemn the motives or the means by which it had been acquired. Such in the main had caused the extension of our Indian Empire : and there was reason to apprehend that such was the course into which Russia, however unwillingly, was about to be drawn.' [1]

Nevertheless the study of the gradual advance of Russia towards India could not fail to be a source of anxiety, which became acute after Samarkand had been annexed in 1868. In 1872 a correspondence took place between Lord Granville and the Chancellor Gortchakoff, in continuation of the earlier correspondence commenced by Lord Clarendon.[2] It was foreseen that a critical moment would arrive if the Russian forward movement affected the northern territories of the Ameer of Afghanistan, whose States marched on the east and north-east with the frontiers of British India.

'In the opinion of her Majesty's Government [Lord Granville wrote to the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg], the right of the Ameer of Cabul (Shere Ali) to the possession of the territories up to the Oxus, as far down as Khoja Saleh, is fully established ; and they believe—and have so stated to him through the Indian Government—that he would have a right to defend these territories if invaded. On the other hand, her Majesty's authorities in India have declared their determination to remonstrate strongly with the Ameer should he evince any disposition to overstep these limits of his kingdom.' [3]

In 1873, Count Brunnow was Ambassador in London, but his utterances were vague, and Lord Granville thought it

[1] Lord Clarendon to Sir Andrew Buchanan, March 27, 1869.

[2] *Central Asia*, No. 2, 1873.

[3] Lord Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus, October 17, 1872 ; *Correspondence with Russia regarding Central Asia*, 1872, p. 1. See also *Central Asia*, No. 2, 1873, p. 68.

desirable to make him understand that 'hiding his head and his spectacles in the sand does not conceal his body.'[1] In the same year Count Schouvaloff, a statesman enjoying the full confidence of the Emperor of Russia, arrived in England on a confidential mission, and gave assurances to Lord Granville that an expedition to Khiva, which had started the previous year, was only intended to 'punish acts of brigandage,' and that there was no intention to annex Khiva; nothing, indeed, the Envoy assured Lord Granville, could be further from the intentions of his Imperial master.[2] Lord Granville received the Envoy at Walmer, enjoyed his society, and distrusted his assurances. It was known that the Chancellor Gortchakoff was jealous of the special Envoy, in whom he saw a rival and his own possible successor; indeed, it was quite obvious to Lord Granville that 'they were at daggers drawn.'[3]

The Russian advance on Khiva proved more fortunate than the expedition despatched by the Emperor Nicholas in 1839, which perished in the deserts through the severity of the climate. Khiva fell, and, notwithstanding all the assurances of Count Schouvaloff, became practically a Russian province, under a thinly disguised Protectorate. In reaching the Oxus, Russia reached the historic frontier between the Iranian and the Turanian, and had practically brought nearly the whole Tartar race under her rule. But the Oxus, it was alleged, had formerly flowed into the Caspian and not into the Sea of Aral, and there were Turkoman tribes between the new and the old bed of the river. Russia had, however, been driving another approach from the eastern shore of the Caspian Sea at Krasnovodsk, which made it clear that even the historic line of the ancient Oxus would not be the limit of her future ambitions, as the new approach evidently aimed directly at Merv. Hence the anxiety of the British Government became greater than ever to define the northern limits of Afghanistan, from Khoja Saleh westwards towards Sarakhs, which was regarded as

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, April 8, 1873.
[2] Lord Granville to Lord Augustus Loftus, January 8, 1873.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, May 21, 1873.

the most northerly point of Afghan territory in that direction, and had been indicated as such in 1872.

'I like to see my way [Lord Granville had written to the Duke of Argyll at the time] when dealing with such sharp practitioners as our friend at St. Petersburg. I can conceive the Russians pining for Constantinople; but why they should push on to the extreme East, I cannot understand.'[1]

The Russians were believed to have already decided to seize Merv; but the British Ambassador at St. Petersburg, Lord Augustus Loftus, after communications with Count Schouvaloff, thought that there was time yet to prevent it, and to obtain an agreement for a definite boundary, which could be expected to last for a period at least as long as that ordinarily covered by diplomatic arrangements relating to political limits drawn under such circumstances. Prince Bismarck at this time expressed the opinion to Lord Odo Russell, that he thought it was a mistake to suppose that Russian statesmen at that time 'meditated further conquests.' He considered, on the contrary, that 'they felt acutely that they had not men capable of governing and administering their vast possessions; and it was the absence of that class of men which would cause the weakness of Russia for years to come.'[2]

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE.

CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, *December* 20, 1873.

'SIR,—Many thanks for your Royal Highness's note.

'I need not say that the Khiva Treaty has been carefully considered, and brought by me before the Cabinet.

'As to the past, the matter is very clear. We did not object to the expedition to Khiva. I do not see how we could have done so; and Northbrook strongly advised the Khan to make proper amends, which he declined to do.[3]

'The Emperor of Russia chose spontaneously to send us assurances by Count Schouvaloff, of which Gortchakoff highly disapproved.

[1] Lord Granville to the Duke of Argyll, January 6, December 2, 1872.
[2] Lord Odo Russell to Lord Granville, May 14, 1873.
[3] Lord Northbrook was at this time Governor-General of India.

'I believe the Emperor was perfectly sincere at the time; but he is not a strong man, and it would require a very strong man to resist the military element by which he is surrounded, and who naturally think it necessary to have some *quid* for costly and troublesome expeditions, and some security against the recurrence of the grievances of which they have complained.

'The result has been a Treaty which I have no doubt is inconsistent with the Emperor's assurances, although it might (if he had not volunteered to give any assurances) have been a result of the war, of which we should have no great reason to complain.

'As it is, I agree with your Royal Highness that we have a right to resent the breaking of his assurance; but your Royal Highness does not suggest how we are to resent it. Is it to be by biting or merely by barking? It appears to me impossible to go to war to enforce the rescinding of the Treaty; and if not, the question is, in what form ought we to notice the Treaty in a manner consistent with dignity and best calculated to discourage further expeditions?

'I have drafted a despatch, which has only been seen and approved by two of the Cabinet, and is in circulation for the others, who will say whether it properly represents their policy as settled at our last meeting.

'In the meanwhile the Russians are opening a sore in their own body; they have excited the bitterest hatred in the inhabitants of Central Asia; they are embarrassing their finances; and if it is to come to a struggle, the nearer that struggle takes place to Afghanistan, the stronger we are, and the weaker they must be. . . . I quite agree with your Royal Highness as to not allowing the approaching marriage to interfere in the slightest degree with the policy which ought to be pursued.[1] 'I have the honour to be, &c.

'GRANVILLE.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HALIFAX.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *December* 27, 1873.

'MY DEAR HALIFAX,—I was much obliged, as I always am, for your suggestions about the Central Asian question; and I forwarded them to Gladstone, begging him to pay all the attention to which your knowledge of the subject and your instinct as to public opinion in this country entitled them, but adding that I did not think our position and that of the Russians was the same, we having assumed an enormous empire, and having decided to concentrate ourselves—not to please any foreign Power, but to consolidate ourselves—and

[1] The allusion is to the marriage of the Duke of Edinburgh.

to remain where we could best resist all foreign attacks: they having the excuse of aggressive tribes to deal with.

'Gladstone answers:—

'"I am by no means sure that the line Halifax suggests is as easy as it appears to him, or that *his* recital would be better than a series of bitter recriminations. He selects his own period of comparison, after the Punjaub, after Scinde, after Burmah. I have never heard of a Russian annexation as bad as the annexation of Scinde. I had just entered the Cabinet when it was done—done by Ellenborough in India, most reluctantly acquiesced in by Peel's Cabinet, every member of which, if I remember right, decidedly disapproved of it."

'I wish you would take up this glove, and draft a skeleton despatch for consideration. If it were decided to send it, it might go separately as an academic criticism on the Loftus-Schouvaloff conversation.

'The difficulty consists in not laying ourselves open to a rejoinder.

'G.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF CAMBRIDGE.

WALMER CASTLE, *December* 31, 1873.

'SIR,—Many thanks for your Royal Highness's letter. I am exceedingly obliged to you for giving me your opinions on this most important question. I hope you will not disapprove of the language we have used.

'I have great confidence in Northbrook's ability, but it would not be fair to him or right in the Home Government to leave on his shoulders the whole responsibility of dealing with Russia in Central Asian questions.

'Does not the press talk a good deal of nonsense about our subserviency to Russia? I remember when year after year, and week after week, Palmerston was accused in the press and in Parliament of the same defect.

'All Russians are intriguers, and Ignatieff is *facile princeps* amongst intriguers. But does he succeed? In the two instances your Royal Highness mentions, Elliot's quiet firmness entirely foiled him.[1] So with regard to the Canal of Suez—so with endeavours to put us wrong with the Austrians—so with his attempt to persuade the Turks that we were Persians, and the Persians that we were Turks. He has succeeded, to the great disgust of the Russian Government, in

[1] General Ignatieff was at this time Russian Ambassador, and Sir Henry Elliot British Ambassador, at Constantinople.

turning the Greeks against Russia; and he is not to remain much longer at Constantinople. There, however, he has two means of influence which it is difficult for our Ambassador to meet, viz. secret service money in the Harem, and unbounded flattery of the Sultan, whom he tells that absolute government is the only successful one, and that he ought to disregard the advice of his Ministers and act for himself.

'Notwithstanding these means, in what has he succeeded, in what has Elliot failed? 'I have the honour to be, &c.

'GRANVILLE.'

Lord Clarendon had hoped that an agreement for the recognition of a 'neutral zone' might stave off almost indefinitely the risk of the much dreaded collision between Great Britain and Russia.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER, *September* 30, 1873.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—In the spring of 1869, Clarendon earnestly recommended the recognition of some neutral territory between the possessions of England and Russia which would be the limit of their possessions in Asia, and scrupulously respected by both Powers. It appears from despatches, records of conversation in Russia and in England, and a private letter of Prince Gortchakoff, that the Emperor and the Russian Government shared these views. Afghanistan was proposed by Russia, and declared as entirely beyond the sphere in which Russia might be called upon to use her influence. The difference between the Russian Government and ours was as to the proper limits of Afghanistan—our Government suggesting the line of the Oxus.

'The Russians expressed apprehension of attacks on the part of Shere Ali, and insisted that, if exercised, the influence of England was sufficient to check him. The English Government expressed confidence in Shere Ali's moderation, stated that all their advice was to that effect, but denied that their influence was paramount. No conclusion was arrived at by Lord Clarendon.

'These communications continued in the same tone, whilst I was at the Foreign Office, until October 1871, when the limits of Afghanistan approved by the Indian Government were clearly laid down by a despatch to Lord A. Loftus. The idea of a neutral zone was abandoned; we stating that our advice had hitherto been attended to by Shere Ali, and would be much strengthened for the

future, if the Russians would explicitly acknowledge the right of the Ameer to the territories which he claimed.

'The Russian Government yielded all the points in connection with the boundary of Afghanistan. They pressed much for a guarantee from us of the Ameer's abstention from all hostile acts. We declined giving a guarantee, but gave assurances of our advice being in that sense. 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Owing to the discussion of the possibility of the formation of a neutral zone, an idea became current that an agreement at some unspecified date had actually been made between Russia and Great Britain, which was being violated by Russia, as she gradually continued her advance. But—and it was Mr. Disraeli who pointed it out in 1876—

'the idea that Great Britain and Russia agreed to establish a neutral zone between their respective empires, and that Russia had all this time systematically violated the neutral zone that was agreed upon, was one of those delusions which, having once got possession of the public mind, it was very difficult to terminate. The fact is that no neutral zone was ever agreed upon by the statesmen of the different Powers . . .

'I am not of that school who view the advances of Russia into Asia with those deep misgivings some do. I think that Asia is large enough for the destinies of both Russia and England. . . . Whatever may be my confidence in the destiny of England, I know that empires are only maintained by vigilance, by firmness, by courage, by understanding the temper of the times, and by watching those significant indications that may easily be observed.'

'The keys of India,' he insisted in a phrase which has become historical, 'are in London;' and far from looking forward with alarm to the development of the power of Russia in Central Asia, he saw no reason 'why she should not conquer Tartary, any more than why England should not have conquered India.' 'I only wish,' he added, 'that the people of Tartary may gain as much advantage by being conquered by Russia as the people of India from being conquered by this country.'[1]

A very few years were sufficient to show that the people of Tartary, and still more their neighbours, undoubtedly had

[1] May 5, 1876. *Hansard*, ccxxix. pp. 133–141.

gained great advantages from the fall of the government of the Khans.

'I cannot forget [said Mr. O'Donovan, speaking at the Royal Geographical Society in 1882] that it is not so many years ago that the Muscovite arms arrived at Khiva and Bokhara, and sent 40,000 Persian captives to their homes who had long pined in captivity. This was one great step in progress; something that had never been heard of before in the whole of Central Asian history; and if to-day these devastating Turkomans are wiped out by some who perhaps are not so liberal as we should be, who shall say whether it is not for the better?'

But while giving full weight to these testimonies as to the good results which could be shown to have followed the Russian conquest of Tartary, it was clear, as the advance of Russia was still steady and continuous, that the moment was approaching when a conflict might take place, unless the northern boundaries of Afghanistan and the Persian frontier were demarcated under some arrangement which all parties would agree to respect. In 1880 Geok-tepe, the great fortress of the Uzbeg Turkomans, fell, and the report of an advance on Merv again became current.

The old difficulty remained of arriving at any understanding with Russia which would be observed.

'I admit [Lord Granville said in the House of Lords] that great advances have been made on India by Russia, and I am the last man who can say that some of those advances have not been made after very solemn assurances and specious explanations to the contrary.'[1]

Such was still the position of affairs, when Lord Granville again became Secretary of State. Lord Dufferin was the Ambassador in St. Petersburg, and Lord Ripon had just been appointed Governor-General of India.

The Prince of Wales was to visit St. Petersburg. 'There can be no question,' Lord Granville wrote to him, 'that a good understanding and friendly relations between this country and Russia may be of immense advantage to both, while the hostility which is recommended by many good

[1] *Hansard*, ccxxviii. 858.

friends abroad can only be the cause of great evil. The best course appears to be, to be perfectly frank, not to make undue concessions, but to avoid unnecessary complaints and petty acts of ill-will.' [1]

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD DUFFERIN.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May* 24, 1880.

'MY DEAR DUFFERIN,—It is a great pleasure getting your interesting and amusing letters. From what I hear, your position at St. Petersburg is excellent. I shall be curious to know whether it is made better or worse by a hostile Cabinet having lost power in England, and one of whom they are not quite certain having replaced them. Lobanoff [2] has frequently told me that his mission here was for the purpose of coming to a good understanding with us on all matters—that Salisbury was uncivil and perfectly reticent—that Dizzy was civility itself, but equally reticent. I have had one or two conversations, in which we fenced a good deal, and in which I pressed him, saying that everything was more or less new to us, while as he had come for an express purpose he must have something in his basket to offer. It ended by his saying, "To tell you the truth, I give my opinion to my Government that you are friendly to us, but there seems to have been no confirmation of this. If Lord Dufferin would say something, I am sure it would produce an excellent effect, and probably in addition cause an authority to be sent to me to speak openly."

'Nothing has yet come of this except an invitation to me to dine next Sunday.

'We wish to be good friends with Russia. We do not think there need be any ostentation about it, and we do not propose to make any concession excepting with a view to our own interests as well as to hers. But I can conceive no worse policy than to be always nagging, and always trying to play each other tricks. I am sure you agree.

'Yours, G.'

In July 1880 the agreement already mentioned was made with the Ameer.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

WALMER, *October* 1, 1881.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—I return Ripon's letter. It is in accordance with Northbrook's views. I shall be extremely glad

[1] Lord Granville to the Prince of Wales. March 21, 1881.

[2] Russian Ambassador in London.

to have the whole subject thoroughly discussed in the Cabinet. I am quite open to conviction, but I do not at present see the great value of Ripon's suggestion. As far as home consumption goes, I greatly doubt the expediency of our proposing a treaty, which is formally to sanction the taking possession of Merv by the Russians. As an element of defence of India, I do not see the great efficacy of a treaty.

'Whenever we are on bad terms with the Russians, treaty or no treaty, they will intrigue with the Afghans as a counter-irritant. The treaty may make it a more perfect *casus belli*; but if we want to fight, we shall find plenty of excuses without one.

'Yours, G.'

FOREIGN OFFICE, *October* 9, 1881.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—A long memorandum on Egypt, and another on Central Asia, will be ready for circulation this evening or to-morrow. I believe Ripon's has not been received back at the India Office.

'It would be an excellent but a very difficult thing to have something settled about the Persian boundary.

'It appears that the understanding which dates from forty-six years ago is vague.

'As to a treaty to give Merv and nothing more to the Russians, I am open to conviction, and I do not like to oppose the much more competent opinions of yourself, Ripon, and I believe Northbrook. I should like to hear the matter discussed.

'But if the Russians wish to go to Merv, and think the treaty an impediment, they will find means of objecting to making it.

'If they do not wish to go to Merv, the treaty will not be of much use in restraining them from intriguing when they wish it, and will be a subject of much attack at home.

'Yours, G.'

The southward advance of Russia threatened to raise questions with Persia as well as with Afghanistan.

Prince Lobanoff, in a conversation with Lord Granville at this time, observed that—

'the definition of the Persian frontier had been pushed as far as was necessary or useful for the present; and that if in future it became necessary to define further the boundary between Russia and Persia, it was a matter to be settled between the two conterminous states.'

It, however, appeared strange that Prince Lobanoff should contend that the question of the Persian frontier beyond

Askabad was not one in which the British Government was interested, for although no formal treaty existed by which Russia and England mutually agreed to respect the integrity and independence of the Shah's dominions, yet an understanding to that effect had been arrived at in 1834–1838, and had up to that time been considered on both sides to subsist in full force. It had more than once been acknowledged by Russia, and had always been asserted by the British Government to exist. Moreover, in 1875, Lord Derby, when Foreign Secretary, following in the steps of his predecessors in office, endeavoured strongly to impress upon the Russian Government the importance which was attached by England to the avoidance of a closer contact between Russia and England anywhere in Central Asia; and the most solemn assurances were thereupon given by the Emperor, that he had no intention of extending the frontiers of Russia as then existing in Central Asia, either on the side of Bokhara or on the side of Krasnovodsk and the Attrek river towards Persia.

It was impossible to contend, after recalling these facts, that the recent advance of Russia in Central Asia, which had brought her many hundreds of miles nearer to the frontiers of India, was a 'matter to be settled' between Russia and Persia, and, by inference, a matter in which the British Government was not interested.

Lord Hartington had gathered from a conversation with Malcolm Khan, the Persian Minister, that the difficulties of maintaining the authority of the Shah over the tribes of the Atek and the districts immediately adjoining had been somewhat exaggerated, and might perhaps be altogether removed. He was of opinion that it would be of advantage to sound the Russian Ambassador on this point, and while giving due consideration to any suggestions which he might have to make, to see whether some understanding, in the interests of both Great Britain and Russia, could not be arrived at.[1]

The force of the objections expressed by Lord Derby

[1] Memorandum by Mr. Reginald Brett, prepared for Lord Hartington, February 22, 1882.

in a memorandum of October 25, 1875, to the frontiers of Russia and England becoming conterminous, had not diminished since 1882; but even if they could be considered to have been removed, the nearer approach of Russia to the frontiers of Afghanistan, without some more definite understanding between the two Powers, could only be fraught with danger to the peace which it was as much the interest of Russia as of England to preserve. It was obvious that, unwilling as her Majesty's Government were, and had proved themselves to be, to interfere in the affairs of Afghanistan, the continual advance of Russia might compel them to reconsider their position.

If, however, the Russian Government still held the opinion which it professed to hold in 1875, as expressed at that time by the Emperor and his Ministers, was it not desirable that some attempt should be made to avert the necessity for a further advance, and precipitating risks which were foreseen at that time, and were as clearly foreseen now?

Communications between the Cabinet and the Government of India continued during 1882; the main points under discussion remaining the same. On the one hand were the arguments drawn from the advantage of a definite agreement in writing; on the other hand was the belief that no agreement would be observed one moment longer than suited the convenience of Russia. In 1883 the assurances given to the Ameer in 1880 were renewed.

### Lord Granville to the Queen.

*February* 9, 1883.

'Lord Granville presents his humble duty to your Majesty. He has had since the Cabinet a long conversation with Lord Hartington, Lord Northbrook, Lord Kimberley, and Sir Charles Dilke, on the subject of Russia in Central Asia.

The result may thus be summarised.

'There is no doubt of the Russians moving on and feeling their way towards the frontier of Afghanistan. The question remains how this can best be met. It is doubtful whether any understanding

with Russia would be really efficacious, and it seems certain that the Russians do not desire to come to an understanding.

'It was considered whether it would be advisable to propose to the Ameer of Afghanistan that his frontier should be more clearly defined. It was agreed that there would be an advantage in this, but only if the Ameer proposed it; that if the Indian Government suggested it, it would give rise to all the irritation and suspicions which was the case when Lord Northbrook made a similar suggestion to the late Ameer.

'It appeared to the Committee that on this, and indeed on the whole question, the meeting of Lord Ripon and the Ameer might be productive of great advantage.

'The Government of India have been authorised to renew to the Ameer in very explicit terms the assurance that if he is attacked by Russia, he may rely on your Majesty's support.

'Lord Kimberley will communicate at once privately with Lord Ripon as to the best way of improving the communications with Quettah.'

In 1884 Merv was occupied by Russia, although in 1882 the Chancellor Gortchakoff had volunteered a declaration that the place lay outside the sphere of Russian ambition and that the Czar had not the slightest desire or intention of taking it. The annexation of Merv brought Russian territory almost if not actually into touch with that claimed by Afghanistan, and the delimitation question at once assumed a new importance, as Herat was certain to be the next place threatened, and Herat stood in a different category from the Tartar khanates and even from Merv.

An agreement to appoint a Joint Commission to demarcate the boundary was at length arrived at, and Sir Peter Lumsden, who had been appointed Chief British Commissioner, started for the Russo-Afghan frontier before the winter set in, at the head of an imposing suite of officers and a numerous escort. It had been agreed that he was to meet the Russian Chief Commissioner, General Zelenoi, and that the work on the frontier was to be carried out on the spot by them with a staff of engineers and surveyors. But as the winter wore on, it was found impossible to induce the Russian Government to order General Zelenoi to proceed to his post. His arrival was fixed for

October 13 ; but early in October it was announced that the General was ill and could not arrive till February. But in February the illness of the General, which was rumoured to be a diplomatic illness, still continued, and no substitute was appointed. The result was that when Sir Peter Lumsden arrived on the spot on November 19, 1884, the work could not be commenced. Frequent and urgent communications in regard to the delay were passing between the two Governments, but no satisfactory answer or explanation could be obtained from Russia. This breach of good faith was rendered all the more serious because a large Russian force, consisting partly of regular troops and partly of half-barbarous levies raised among the recently subjugated tribes of Central Asia, and commanded by officers of the most pronounced type of the 'forward' school, was rapidly pushing to the south of Sarakhs, and annexing districts generally considered to form part of the very regions to which the work of the Commission was specifically intended to be applied. It was also threatening positions such as the Zulfikar Pass, which the military authorities agreed was necessary to the defence of the northern frontier of Afghanistan. Sir Peter Lumsden found the Russian posts at least forty miles south of Sarakhs at Pul-i-khatun, and another forty miles south on the Heri Rud at the Zulfikar Pass.

These events coincided with the failure of the expedition to relieve General Gordon, and the interruption of the cordial relations which had existed between Great Britain and Germany. After the death of General Gordon, the Government narrowly escaped defeat on a motion of censure in the House of Commons. The majority fell to twelve. A hostile vote was carried in the Lords. Would the Government resign? At a Cabinet—said to have been the longest held in the memory of man—the question was debated to and fro for many hours. Lord Granville was among those who considered resignation the wisest and the most patriotic course. Such also up almost to the very last moment was Mr. Gladstone's own opinion. His decision—conveyed to Lord Granville—had

been that if the Government majority in the House of Commons fell below twenty, the figure which represented the official vote, it would be a duty to resign. But the morning after the vote, Mr. Bright brought his powerful influence to bear in an opposite direction. He considered that for Mr. Gladstone to retire at this moment and allow a Tory Government to take office would be a crime, and his opinion prevailed with the Prime Minister. Mr. Gladstone had not had an opportunity of conveying this opinion and his own altered views to Lord Granville before the Cabinet met. Lord Granville in urging his own view, which all but prevailed, was mainly influenced by the conviction that the procrastination of the Russian Government in regard to the mission of General Zelenoi was the result of the tacit approval of, if not of an actual suggestion from Prince Bismarck. This suggestion was believed to have been conveyed from Berlin through M. Radowitz. It was certain, in Lord Granville's opinion, that as long as the Liberal Government was in power, one question after another in every quarter of the world would be stirred up to the detriment of the country by Prince Bismarck.

Although at the time all the facts were not fully known even at the Foreign Office, the situation had been correctly appreciated by Lord Granville as a whole. It hinged on the secret treaty of neutrality which in 1884 Prince Bismarck had concluded with Russia, without the knowledge and behind the backs of the other parties to the Triple Alliance, viz. Austria-Hungary and Italy. It was intended to protect Germany in the event of Austria-Hungary becoming reconciled with Russia, or of the long talked-of alliance between France and Russia taking effect. Russia, however, interpreted this treaty, which secured her western frontier, as also giving her a free hand in Asia, and Prince Bismarck gave a tacit approval, as part of the new policy, to a system of persistent annoyance against Great Britain.

The Russian advance to the south continued, and on February 21 it became known that a body of troops was

close to Penjdeh, where a considerable Afghan force was stationed. Penjdeh was regarded as Afghan territory. In March 1884, M. de Giers had formally repudiated a Russian map which placed the Russian boundary south of it, but had shortly afterwards stated that it was doubtful under whose jurisdiction it really was, and that as a Boundary Commission was now proposed, the decision of the question had better be left to it.[1] Meanwhile, in the Far East, Russia, taking advantage of the disputes between China and Japan, was proposing a convention which would have placed Korea under the sole protection of the Czar.

On March 3, Lord Granville briefly described the situation to the House of Lords.

'The Russian Government [he said], in reply to a remonstrance from her Majesty's Government, declined on February 24 to withdraw their advanced posts at Sary-yazy and the Zulfikar Pass; but gave assurances that their officers had been ordered carefully to avoid conflicts with the Afghans, and that complications were only to be feared on the Afghans attacking the Russian posts. Sir Peter Lumsden, who has exerted himself to prevent any collision, has advised the Afghans to maintain themselves in the positions now occupied by them. The advice has been approved by her Majesty's Government, and he has been instructed to urge them at the same time not to advance beyond their present positions.'[2]

Constant communications were now passing between the two Governments. The seriousness of the situation can best be realised by the following telegram the Queen sent to the Emperor of Russia at this grave moment.

THE QUEEN OF ENGLAND TO HIS IMPERIAL MAJESTY THE EMPEROR OF RUSSIA.

*March* 4, 1885.

'Le motif qui me pousse à vous adresser ce télégramme vient du vif désir que j'éprouve qu'il n'y ait pas de malentendu entre les deux pays. Les nouvelles qui me parviennent de la frontière d'Afghanistan me causent la plus grande inquiétude.

[1] Sir Edward Thornton to Lord Granville, June 24, 1884. See as to Penjdeh, Colonel Stewart's report inclosed in Mr. Thornton's despatch of April 3, 1884, and the letter of the India Office to the Foreign Office, July 1, 1884.

[2] *Hansard*, ccxciv. 1879.

'Je fais appel à vos bons sentiments, cher frère, pour dire tout ce qui vous est possible pour prévenir les malheurs qui pourraient s'ensuivre d'un conflit armé entre les troupes Russes et Afghanes.'

The Russian Government at length explained that the delay of General Zelenoi in arriving at his post originated in the conviction that before an effectual delimitation could take place on the spot, the principles upon which the frontier line was to be based—whether they were to be purely geographical, or to be partly based on ethnographic considerations as well—ought first to be determined, and that they were ready to despatch M. Lessar to London to open negotiations with that object. Why under the circumstances General Zelenoi had been appointed at all, and why the discovery of the necessity of previous discussions had not been made earlier, was not, however, explained in any intelligible manner. It was evident that here was an entire change of policy which must cause considerable delay; and the risk became extreme that if the Russian advance meanwhile continued, public opinion in England, already exasperated at the bad faith of the Russian Government, would recognise in it a settled intention of taking further advantage of the difficulties in Egypt, in order either to provoke a rupture in Asia, or to seize the greater part of the disputed territory while negotiations were proceeding. The risk was also great that the Afghans themselves, encouraged by the presence in their neighbourhood of Sir Peter Lumsden and his numerous suite with their military escort, and hoping to involve them in the struggle, would not shrink from a collision with the advancing Russian forces, even if they did not purposely provoke such a collision themselves. The immediate object of the British Government became, therefore, at all hazards to prevent a collision taking place between the Russian and Afghan forces at Penjdeh.

In order to be free to face Russia effectually in Central Asia, the restoration of good relations with Germany was the immediate and most pressing necessity of the hour. Germany held the key of the situation. The good-will of the Porte was

also essential, and the Sultan was still believed to be in the pocket of the German Ambassador.

Prince Bismarck was now again mentioning Heligoland.

'I reminded Count Münster [Lord Granville wrote in a memorandum recording a conversation on this subject] that in the previous conversation on the same subject he had bound me in honour to keep secret what he was about to tell me, and he even expressed a wish that I should not mention it to my colleagues. On that occasion he had spoken to me about Heligoland. He informed me that it was the intention of Germany to open a canal into the Baltic, which would offer great commercial advantages to us and to Germany. For the security of that canal it would be necessary to give a good and fortified harbour to Heligoland. This could only be done at a great expense, which England could not be expected to undertake, but for which Germany would be prepared. It would be necessary for Germany to have possession of the rock, but with conditions which would give all the advantages of the harbour to England.

'Count Münster added that he would put the question to us in a few days. This he had never done. I was prepared with an answer if he had done so.

'I should have told him that I had mentioned the subject to Mr. Gladstone alone, that we both felt the immense burden on the Government of the Reform question at home, and of the Egyptian question abroad. That we could not add another subject which might excite much discussion; but that when those questions were settled, we should be prepared to give a friendly consideration to his question.

'Since then the Reform question has been set free from its principal difficulties. The assurances which Count Münster had just given, raised hopes of a settlement of the Egyptian financial difficulty. If this was attained in a manner generally in accordance with the views of her Majesty's Government, and if colonial questions in other parts of the world could be arranged between the two Governments, we should be prepared to ask the Cabinet to enter into a friendly consideration of the suggested plan respecting Heligoland, and of the necessary conditions which should attach to it.

'I requested Count Münster to assure me that we should both be bound in honour as to secrecy in the same manner as we had been bound with regard to his first conversation.'[1]

[1] Part of a memorandum contained in a letter from Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, January 1885.

Prince Bismarck seized this moment for a carefully prepared explosion of wrath in the Reichstag. In a conversation with Mr. Meade at Berlin during the West African Conference he had observed that, up to within a few years ago, he had done everything in his power to facilitate English policy in Egypt and elsewhere; but that for some time he had been badly treated by England, 'whose actions did not accord with her professions.' In the debate on the fall of Khartoum, the Duke of Richmond quoted these observations, which had appeared in papers presented to Parliament, as a proof of the mismanagement of British foreign policy. Replying on February 27, Lord Granville said that he could not be bound by the opinions of Prince Bismarck as to the conduct of the Government, for the simple reason that their policy had never yet been in accord with the advice in regard to Egypt which he gave to the late as well as to the present Ministers—'to take it.' It was no doubt friendly advice; 'but,' he proceeded, 'when the noble Duke reproaches us for not having followed that advice, I have to ask him in return, why it was not followed by Lord Beaconsfield, who when the same advice was given to him, answered that he 'would not take Egypt at a gift.' [1]

Lord Salisbury, who had been Lord Beaconsfield's coadjutor at Berlin, retorted that he had never before heard that Lord Beaconsfield had made such an observation. Lord Granville replied that he spoke 'on high authority,' and should continue

[1] Lord Granville probably spoke on the authority of Lord Ampthill. M. de Blowitz used to tell the story, which is to be found in his *Memoirs*, of the confidences made to him by Prince Bismarck in regard to his conversations at Berlin in 1878 with Lord Beaconsfield. In the *Memoirs*, however, though the invitation 'to take Egypt' is given, the reply attributed to Lord Beaconsfield differs materially. 'When I saw Beaconsfield for the first time,' Prince Bismarck is represented as saying, 'I said to him, "Why are you opposed to Russia? You might come to an understanding with her. It would be to the interest of both countries. Why do you not take Egypt? France would not bear you any ill-will on that account very long. Besides, you could give her a compensation—Tunis or Syria, for instance—and then Europe would at last be free from this question of Turkey, which is constantly bringing her within an ace of a fresh war." Beaconsfield did not reply, but I saw that my words had not fallen on a deaf ear.' Blowitz, *Memoirs*, p. 166.

to believe he was right until Lord Salisbury would contradict him on equal authority.[1]

A few days after this passage of arms, Prince Bismarck entered the field in person. He first denied that he had said what was attributed to him. He then made a general onslaught on the British Foreign Office, commencing with a long statement of the grievances in regard to Angra Pequena, but adding a complaint about the number of miscellaneous inquiries which had been addressed to him by Lord Granville —inquiries which after all only proved that the British Foreign Office had perhaps been, if anything, too deferential. 'It was they,' he said, 'who sought advice, not he who had tendered it.' The multitude of the English despatches and notes had indeed quite overwhelmed him—while on the other hand he had experienced the greatest difficulty in obtaining a reply to an important inquiry contained in a despatch from him dated May 5, 1884. This despatch, which was now brandished before the eyes of the German Parliament, had, he said, received no reply, notwithstanding the urgent character which attached to it. But this was not all ; confidential communications had been published in English Blue Books without consulting him, and upon this theme he harped at great length and with concentrated bitterness. In regard to Egypt he had never, he said, advised England to 'take it;' and he proceeded to explain at considerable length the character of his conversations with Lord Beaconsfield at Berlin, and the advice with reference to a Turkish intervention which he had given at various times.[2] He did not admit that the advice which he had given could be legitimately described as advice 'to take Egypt,' because he did not mean the occupation to be so continued without reference to existing treaties.[3]

[1] *Hansard*, ccxciv. 1582.

[2] *Die Reden des Minister Präsidenten und Reichskanzler Fürsten von Bismarck*, ii. 61, March 2, 1885. See too *Hansard*, ccxcv. p. 227.

[3] 'I have asked permission of Prince Bismarck to make use of the despatch to Count Münster of January 14, 1885, to which he does not object, so that I add the reservation that he did not mean it (the occupation) to be so continued without reference to existing treaties.' Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, March 6, 1885.

The reader of these pages must decide how far the conversations of Prince Bismarck with Lord Ampthill and his official despatches are inconsistent with the story of Lord Granville in the House of Lords in regard to events subsequent to 1880. The exact character of the conversations between Prince Bismarck and Lord Beaconsfield must remain shrouded in mystery. The story of the communications which had passed in 1884 has already been related. No despatch of the character described by Prince Bismarck was ever communicated to Lord Granville, nor was a copy of such a despatch ever left with him.

'I had a talk with Münster,' Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone on February 4. 'He was frightened out of his wits, and went home to consult his archives. He found the famous despatch, but a telegram not to act upon it. He begged me to keep this secret.'[1]

'There is no doubt about it [Mr. Gladstone said in the House of Commons], that Prince Bismarck was under a mistake in his belief that the despatch had been communicated to her Majesty's Government. For my own part I will not depend upon my own memory, for it betrays me from time to time into error; but I remember that on hearing of that despatch, I immediately said to Earl Granville, that I could not believe my memory had so entirely and absolutely gone, that I could not recollect such a despatch. Earl Granville said: "I am in the same position. I have no recollection of it."'[2]

There were reasons—they have already been indicated—which made it undesirable to 'give Münster away;'[3] but as questions were also asked in the House of Commons and hostile motions were threatened, Lord Granville addressed a letter to the Parliamentary Under Secretary for Foreign Affairs and directed him to read it in reply to a question of which Mr. Labouchere had given notice. It ran as follows:—

*March* 9, 1885.

'DEAR FITZMAURICE,—I take the unusual course of writing to you a letter in answer to Mr. Labouchere's questions, as they affect me

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, February 4, 1885.
[2] *Hansard*, ccxcv. 977, March 12, 1885.
[3] Lord Granville to Mr Gladstone, 1885.

personally, rather than the Foreign Office. I never received, nor had I until lately any knowledge of, Prince Bismarck's despatch of May 5. Count Münster and Count Herbert Bismarck not long afterwards each told me that the German Government could not maintain a friendly attitude on Egyptian matters if we continued to be unfriendly on colonial questions. I denied that we had been unfriendly, and gave positive assurances on the part of my colleagues and myself of friendly action for the future. Both Count Herbert Bismarck and Prince Bismarck expressed at the time their satisfaction with these assurances. The tension which has since arisen, resulted from the serious difference of opinion on the part of the two Governments as to whether those assurances have been kept or broken. I need not now renew that discussion, more especially as I have reason to hope that this friction will be a thing of the past. Count Münster was not present at the conversations which I had with Count Herbert Bismarck. It is not usual for the Ambassador and his First Secretary to come at the same time. What I have stated above will show that it was impossible for me to complain to Count Herbert Bismarck of the non-communication of a despatch which I did not know to exist—a despatch which appears to have been kept secret and to have dealt generally with the political situation for the guidance of Count Münster.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'[1]

Notwithstanding these explanations a state of acute tension between the two countries was produced by Prince Bismarck's extraordinary revelations; and to those who were familiar with the true story of the Ems telegram of 1870, an analogy suggested itself which was ominous. Matters seemed quite at their worst when an event, which at this juncture was seen to be impending in France, suddenly and unexpectedly improved the situation. The campaign which Prince Bismarck had been carrying on for the past six months against the Foreign Office largely depended for success on the existence of the Ministry of M. Ferry in France, whose self-imposed mission it had been to stir up trouble in every part of the world against Great Britain, and to be a useful instrument for Prince Bismarck. But in March 1885, M. Ferry's Ministry was seen to be tottering to its fall

[1] On March 1, 1885, a portion of this despatch was confidentially read to Lord Granville.

under the odium of the war in Tonquin. 'It looks,' Mr. Gladstone wrote, 'as if Ferry was to predecease us, and now after the recent experience I shall not grieve.'[1]

Negotiations with Germany on the vexed colonial questions were meanwhile proceeding, more particularly with regard to New Guinea. Sir Julian Pauncefote proposed a plan which, it was hoped might satisfy the German Chancellor, and Count Herbert Bismarck reappeared as co-negotiator with Count Münster in London. Lord Rosebery, who had just joined the Cabinet as Lord Privy Seal, also took part in the negotiations. 'Herbert Bismarck came over again,' Sir Charles Dilke noted, 'and if at his former visit he had only tried to get us to dismiss Lord Derby, on this occasion he wanted us to dismiss Lord Granville and Lord Derby.'[2]

The difficulty of the situation lay in the fact that in order to conciliate Germany in New Guinea and the neighbouring seas, it was necessary to run the risk of flouting the demands of British colonial opinion. Lord Granville, and still more Lord Derby, hesitated to do so; and in Mr. Childers, whose own early career had been in Australia, Lord Derby found an active coadjutor. Mr. Gladstone, however, dominated the situation with his own determined will. He saw that a choice had to be made, and recognised that the continued hostility of Germany was a danger greater than that of the irritation of the Australian colonies about New Guinea and the Pacific islands. He therefore threw the whole weight of his influence into the scale of an agreement with concessions to Germany, notwithstanding his former dislike and suspicions, and the recent conduct of Prince Bismarck which had gone far to justify them.

MR. GLADSTONE TO LORD GRANVILLE.

HOUSE OF COMMONS, *March* 5–6, *midnight*, 1885.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—After the "cloth was drawn" at Rosebery's, with about nine round the table including John Bright, a general and free discussion arose chiefly between Rosebery, Bright, and me, H. Bismarck occasionally intervening, on Colonies, Coloni-

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, March 30, 31, 1885.

[2] Sir Charles Dilke's notes.

sation, Federation, and the like, in a general way. When we went into the drawing-room, I did not use any words of approach, but H. Bismarck did, and so went into the matter of German Colonisation. I stated my opinions in the sense of my Mid-Lothian speech last September. I told him I was so bound to those opinions, that I could not recede from them if I would; that I felt certain those opinions, which on every fit occasion I should uphold in Parliament, would prevail, if they had fair play; that is to say, if you could keep them disengaged from any other subject which might be a cause of quarrel nearer home. But that if they were so minded, then I could with confidence assure for the result. He said there could be no cause of quarrel nearer home, such as I referred to, if the opinions I had declared with regard to German Colonisation should govern the proceedings of the Cabinet. He spoke in a modest and thoroughly friendly manner. He said, "We are the youngest of the Great Powers, and we wish to undertake this function of colonisation, which belongs to a Great Power. But we only hope to do it in a very small and humble manner, and we are in doing it giving to you the strongest proof of confidence in the future friendship of the two countries. For we know that if a Continental Power were to attack our little colonies, we could invade them in return. But we also know that you can assail our colonies with effect; and that we cannot get at you in return, as you are masters of the sea." I cannot presume to answer for any practical result, but nothing could be more rational or more friendly than the conversation. I pointed out to him that it was our duty to deal tenderly in the matter with the prejudices of our Colonies, which were soon to become the dominant Power in the Australasian regions; and to this he quite agreed. I also told him that while there had been some discussions connected with particular acts, he might not be aware of the acts we had refused to do, or words we had refused to speak. He did not repeat to me any complaint of any kind; and I avoided the polemical ground altogether.

'Ever yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

10 DOWNING STREET, *March* 6, 1885.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—A word by way of postscript to my note of yesterday, in which I conveyed to you that, according to Herbert Bismarck, there is and can be no quarrel about Egypt if colonial matters are amicably settled. Now I do hope that you are pressing forward the "Pauncefote" settlement of the north coast of New Guinea, which seems to me the main or only point remaining. It is really impossible to exaggerate the importance of *getting out of the*

*way the bar to the Egyptian settlement.* These words, strong as they are, are in my opinion words of truth and soberness; as, if we cannot wind up at once these small colonial controversies, we shall before we are many weeks older find it to our cost.

'Ever yours,

'W. E. GLADSTONE.'

Under the strong impulse given by Mr. Gladstone, a settlement was now driven through. In New Guinea and the neighbouring islands large concessions were made to the views of Germany. But in Africa, Prince Bismarck afterwards complained that in the negotiations which took place the German negotiators were outwitted, as they were not so well acquainted with the maps as the British negotiators.[1] The vexed boundaries were settled or referred to commissions of competent experts. Prince Bismarck agreed that if a repudiation of Rogozinski took place without question, together with an abandonment of the claim for damages to British subjects, he would not present the claim for damages arising from the Alexandria note. 'The agreement is a little ridiculous,' Lord Granville noted, 'but seems harmless. Herbert Bismarck asked me to keep it secret from the Cabinet. I said I must tell it to you.'[2] 'Not a bad arrangement,' said Lord Selborne, who thought Rogozinski had on the whole proved 'a rather fortunate discovery,' especially as the British claims in the Cameroons in his own opinion were none of the strongest.[3] So Rogozinski was solemnly repudiated. On the other hand, the German protests about the Bay of St. Lucia and the expedition of Sir Charles Warren were, it was understood, not to be heard of any more. It was now possible to take up the question of the settlement of the financial position in Egypt with some hope of success.

Since the failure of the London Conference, 'the materials for a settlement had been accumulating. A report of great ability had been drawn up by Sir Evelyn Baring, Sir

[1] Busch, iii. 145.

[2] M.S. note by Lord Granville, apparently the draft of a letter to Mr. Gladstone. March 8, 1885.

[3] Notes by Lord Selborne, March 8, 1885.

Reginald Welby, Sir Rivers Wilson, and Sir James Carmichael. There was a French counter-proposal not less able, though animated by a less liberal spirit, the author of which was M. de Blignières.'[1] But if the materials had increased, so had the necessity of using them.

One strong weapon was in the hands of the British Government. It lay in a refusal to settle the claims for the payment of the Alexandria indemnities, in which France felt an especial interest, unless all the outstanding liabilities of the Egyptian Government were simultaneously dealt with. The patience of the reader might be tried by an attempt to narrate the details of the various proposals, counter-proposals, rebutters and surrebutters of Continental diplomacy on the subject of Egyptian finance in the winter of 1884–85, which were put forward, not so much on their merits, but rather as useful cards in the political adventures of the German Chancellor and the French Prime Minister. An international guarantee, as desired by Mr. Gladstone, was eventually accepted for the new Egyptian loan. The critics of the Government in the House of Commons saw, or professed to see, another surrender of British interests, but the general voice of the country accepted the arrangement as an equitable settlement of a difficult situation, preferring it, as did Lord Granville himself, to an Anglo-French guarantee, which it was believed would bring with it even greater complications.

By the London Convention of March 1885, Egypt was empowered to raise a loan of nine millions guaranteed by all the Powers. The annuity set aside for the service of this loan was made a first charge upon the revenues assigned to the debt, and was to be paid over to the Commissioners of the Caisse with that object. Germany and Russia were each given a seat on the Commission, which thenceforward consisted of six members. The Caisse, under the original decree of May 1876, had consisted of three members—a Frenchman, an Austrian, and an Italian. In 1877 an Englishman had been added. For two years Egypt was permitted to make a slight reduction of the interest on her debt—a compromise between

[1] Milner, *England in Egypt*, ch. viii. pp. 185–186.

the British view, which had all along been favourable to a reduction of the interest, and the French view, which championed the extreme rights of the bondholders. The Convention also contained certain complicated but important provisions for readjusting the financial relations of the Caisse and the Egyptian Government in regard to the appropriation of any surplus after the payment of the interest on the debt arising from the funds in the possession of the Caisse.[1] The most interesting and the boldest feature, however, in the whole arrangement was that the new loan—it amounted to nine millions—was intended not only to cover and clear off existing liabilities, but to provide a clear million for new works of irrigation and improvement:[1] an arrangement more than justified by the subsequent results.

'I believe [it had been said by a member of the Government in the debates of the previous year] that possibly those who at a future time will look back to the debates of the present time, will realise that the Government in that land where the monuments of the past stand shoulder to shoulder with the work and the realities of everyday life, will have succeeded in establishing something far more useful than the pyramids and the sepulchres of the early kings; borrowing at the same time something of their character: and taking at least one of their characteristics, in having something of their solidity and majestic strength.'[2]

The history of this million has been well described as one of 'the most marvellous chapters even in the romantic chapter of Egyptian finance.' It justified and fulfilled the forecast just quoted; but that history belongs to a later period, and in 1884 the faith in things unseen—and a tolerably strong dose of it—was required in order to see daylight through the thick clouds which shrouded the Egyptian political outlook.

On March 30 the Ministry of M. Ferry fell, on a vote of credit for the Chinese War, and French policy immediately felt the influence of the event.

'Ferry is certainly no loss to us [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone]. He arrived at the Quai d'Orsay quite ignorant of

[1] A summary of this plan will be found in Lord Milner's work on Egypt, p. 190.
[2] *Hansard*, cclxxxii. 2186, 2187.

foreign affairs; and the more he learnt of them, the more subservient he became to Bismarck, and the more tricky to us.' [1]

Good relations were now restored with Germany and France; but if a struggle was to take place with Russia, Italy was also a factor to be taken into account. By the Triple Alliance of 1882 the German Government was assured of the support of Austria-Hungary and Italy against any attack by Russia or by France. By the subsequent Treaty of 1884 with Russia a further security had been obtained by Germany against a French attack. The substance of this Treaty, though not actually known, was probably suspected by the Italian Government, and her statesmen apprehended that Germany, once assured of the neutrality of Russia, might in the end attach a diminished importance to the friendship of Italy. They consequently desired, by means of an understanding with Great Britain, to obtain a further security for their north-western and maritime frontier against France, and hoped to secure it by offering effective military support in Egypt, in return for an assurance of naval aid in the Mediterranean in case of a French attack on Italy. Advantageous as such an offer in many respects might appear, Lord Granville adhered to the view that British policy consisted in avoiding entangling bargains with particular Powers in Egypt. The choice, in his opinion, still lay between the European concert and individual action by Great Britain. In the financial negotiations, it has been seen, he had supported the proposals of Lord Northbrook for the latter. He had ended by having to consent to the former. But he had at least escaped joining in an Anglo-French guarantee.

The three leading statesmen of Italy were M. Depretis, then Prime Minister; M. Mancini, who was at the Foreign Office; and M. Crispi. At the end of 1882, Lord Granville, with the knowledge of Count Menabrea, Italian Ambassador in London, had received M. Crispi, and was struck by the ability and warmth with which he expressed the view that it was desirable that the relations of Italy and Great Britain

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 2, 1885.

should be of the most friendly description.[1] M. Mancini, Lord Granville told M. Crispi, notwithstanding his refusal to co-operate in 1882, had greatly contributed to the establishment and maintenance of good relations; and the negotiations for a Commercial Treaty between the two countries eventually signed in 1883, were a further and material step in the same direction. But by 1884 M. Mancini had come to regret his refusal of 1882, and, alarmed at the signs of the growing hostility of France, was anxious to go beyond general expressions of good-will and the improvement of commercial relations. There was yet an additional reason. Italy had colonial ambitions, and the Italian Ministers of the day saw in an Egyptian policy the means of consoling the national *amour-propre*, which had been hurt by her representatives returning empty-handed in 1878 from Berlin. It was still a matter of constantly recurring controversy whether at Berlin some indirect encouragement had or had not been given to Italy by Prince Bismarck to take Tripoli if France were to occupy Tunis, and whether these suggestions had or had not been listened to with a willing ear by Count Corti, at the time Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Principal Italian Plenipotentiary at the Congress. In 1883 Count Corti was Italian Ambassador at Constantinople, and he found the belief that he had listened with a favourable ear to these suggestions an obstacle to his influence at the Porte. He therefore eagerly denied the story, and Count Nigra, the Italian Ambassador in London, formally disclaimed any intention on the part of his Government to raise the question of Tripoli, or to tamper in any way with the balance of power in the Mediterranean. The ambitions of Italy, it was explained, lay elsewhere.[2]

Italy had acquired a station at Assab Bay on the Danakil Coast in 1882, and now desired to extend her influence in those parts where her missionaries and explorers for some

[1] Lord Granville to Count Nigra, May 11, 1885.

[2] Count Nigra to Lord Granville, January 14, 1885; Count Corti succeeded Count Nigra as Ambassador in London in 1884.

time past had been active, rather than in the basin of the Mediterranean, which circumstances seemed to close to her. Ever since the outbreak of the troubles in the Soudan, a subsidiary centre of disturbance had existed in the neighbourhood of Suakim, an Egyptian garrison town farther north on the Red Sea Coast, which long had been a sort of *tête de pont* for the slave trade between Africa and Asia. Osman Digna, acting in unison with the Mahdi, was still constantly threatening these Egyptian and nominally Turkish possessions. He had been driven off from Suakim itself by Sir Gerald Graham in 1883, and a second expedition had just been despatched to force him back into the interior. His forces were still besieging Kassala, the garrison of which was hard pressed. They also threatened the harbour of Massowah, a point of special importance, for it was the principal port of entry of Abyssinia, whither Admiral Hewett had been recently sent on a mission to King John, which had resulted in a treaty of friendship signed on May 26, 1884. The Italian Government now proposed to garrison Massowah, and offered to aid in the relief of Kassala.

It appeared to the British Government that there might be advantages in the occupation of Massowah at this juncture by Italy. Beyond this, however, they declined to go, as the suzerainty of the Porte over the Red Sea placed difficulties in the way of any direct consent to the annexation of Egyptian territory by a European Power ; and at a moment when a conflict with Russia seemed possible, any irritation of the Sultan had to be avoided. M. Mancini wished that an Italian relief expedition should be sent from Massowah to relieve Kassala, thereby setting the seal on the co-operation of Italy and Great Britain. Lord Granville thought it unwise to commit himself so far. But the situation was not a clear one in the opinion of the Cabinet. 'It is rather hard on the unfortunate Kassala garrison,' Lord Hartington observed, 'that if the Italians should have any inclination at all to attempt their relief, they should be discouraged from doing so by any obstacles it is in our power to remove;'[1] and at the suggestion

[1] Minute by Lord Hartington, March 3, 1885.

of Lord Hartington, the refusal to accept Italian aid in the relief of the garrison at Kassala was not made absolutely without qualification. The Khédive, it was arranged, was to declare to the Porte that the necessities of the situation made it desirable for him to allow the occupation of Massowah; and thereupon the Italian Government, basing itself on that declaration, was to occupy Massowah, and inform Turkey, Great Britain, and Egypt, that the occupation had taken place.[1] The instructions to this effect were carried out with great skill by Sir Evelyn Baring in his communications with Nubar Pasha.[2] Any overt action in the matter by Great Britain was carefully avoided.

'Our line is to be as friendly as possible [Lord Granville told the Ambassador at Rome], and to appreciate their kindly attitude; but not to accept military aid from them, and not to make ourselves more responsible than we can help for their proceedings at Massowah. The Turks are very angry. I have given them advice in discreet language, not to run their heads against the Italian wall, which seems strongly cemented at this time.'[3]

The arrangement concerted was recorded in an exchange of letters between Nubar Pasha and the Italian Consul-General, and on February 6, 1885, the Italian flag was hoisted at Massowah. Unfortunately the language of the Italian admiral in announcing the occupation to the inhabitants, and that of M. Mancini in announcing it to the Italian Chambers, went beyond the necessities of the case, and encouraged the idea that the occupation formed part of a joint policy extending far beyond the Red Sea Coast. The Sultan on receiving the news burst into fury, and announced his intention of sending his ironclads at once into the Red Sea.[4]

'A report has reached us [Lord Granville wrote to Count Nigra] that your Admiral issued a proclamation at Massowah announcing that the occupation of the place was completed in agreement with

[1] Count Nigra to Lord Granville, January 7, 1885.
[2] Sir E. Baring to Lord Granville (telegram), February 13, 1885.
[3] Lord Granville to Sir Augustus Paget, February 13, 1885.
[4] Count Nigra to Lord Granville, February 8, 1885.

England and Egypt. I shall be obliged if you will ascertain from M. Mancini the truth about this proclamation. . . . I cannot express too strongly how much we appreciate the friendly feeling of the Italian Government. We showed on a previous occasion how readily we should welcome the military co-operation of Italy. But the case in the present instance is peculiar. We believe that we have the necessary strength to cope with the difficulty, and that we must ourselves exert that strength for the reason of the moral effect that is desirable. This moral effect would be weakened if at this particular moment we were to call in aid of however friendly a character. . . . If circumstances were to alter, then we might think it desirable to avail ourselves of support so kindly offered.[1] Our plan is to attack Osman Digna before the summer at once. We believe our own force at Suakim to be sufficient; the main difficulties being water and transport, which forbid the employment of a larger force. In the opinion of the War Office the defeat of Osman Digna will probably relieve the pressure on the garrison of Kassala, but not sufficiently to raise the siege.'[2]

Sir Gerald Graham's second expedition inflicted a crushing defeat on Osman Digna. The occupation of Massowah by Italy not only relieved the pressure on Kassala, but also secured the good-will of the statesmen at Rome; and the Sultan ended by accepting the new situation in the Red Sea, when his first outburst had had time to expend itself.

It was now possible for the Cabinet to deal firmly with the position in Asia. Count Herbert Bismarck had told the Prince of Wales that the Chancellor would like to confer personally with one of her Majesty's Ministers; and 'that he and Prince Bismarck had hinted at Dilke or Rosebery going to Berlin to have a talk.'[3]

'It seems to me [Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville] that at this moment there might be utility in the presence of one of us at Berlin, who as a gentleman would carry weight in saying—

'1. That on the frontier question the Cabinet is sincerely pacific, and desires only impartial justice.

'2. That we are absolutely bound to take up the question of any real aggression, notably at Herat, in the manner we have described.'[4]

[1] These words were suggested by Lord Hartington.

[2] Lord Granville to Count Nigra, February 9, 16, March 15, 1885.

[3] Mr. E. Hamilton to Mr. Thomas Sanderson, March 7, 1885.

[4] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, April 1, 1885.

Lord Rosebery accordingly went to Berlin to visit Prince Bismarck, and with him Count Herbert Bismarck returned to Germany.

Meanwhile great events were passing in Central Asia. On March 29 the collision, known in history as the Penjdeh incident, occurred between Russian and Afghan troops. For several weeks the country believed itself to be, and indeed was, on the brink of war with Russia. On April 26 the Chinese, Japanese, and Korean Governments were notified that the British fleet had occupied Port Hamilton, off the southern coast of Korea, and that the Admiral had orders to hoist the flag if the Russian fleet arrived. On April 27, Mr. Gladstone in a speech of matchless eloquence proposed a vote of credit for eleven millions, of which six millions and a half were to meet the case for preparations rendered necessary by the incident at Penjdeh. Fortunately both nations shrank from the dread arbitrament of war, and eventually the contest was closed by the agreement which Lord Granville made with the Russian Government that the disputed responsibility for the 'incident' should be referred to an arbitrator, that the Russian advance should cease, and that communications between the two Governments should be resumed in London on the frontier question prior to the demarcation on the spot. On May 2, at the Royal Academy Dinner, Lord Granville was able to say, in the presence of the Russian Ambassador, that 'the peace of the world would not be disturbed.'

Had peace been secured at too great a sacrifice? Such was the question which was asked, and many at the time answered the question in the affirmative. The official Opposition brought forward a hostile motion; more irresponsible critics denounced the Government as a set of cowards and the murderers of those who had fallen at Penjdeh. A hostile motion was only lost by thirty votes in the House of Commons. But a calmer verdict will hardly endorse the judgment of the critics of the passing hour. That the conduct of the Russian Government in not sending General Zelenoi to meet Sir Peter Lumsden was a breach of a subsisting engagement has been already shown; nor was any palliation

possible of the conduct of the Russian Government in having thus practically dishonoured their own signature. But the question which had to be answered was whether the British Government had shown an insufficient regard for the national honour in refusing to turn the proceedings at Penjdeh into a *casus belli*. The Ameer of Afghanistan, then attending the Durbar of the Governor-General of India at Rawul Pindi, where the assurances of 1880 were renewed once more, himself stated that he attached no importance to Penjdeh, and treated the skirmish as of small account. No advance was made by the Russian troops after the fight, and at the moment it seemed doubtful whether both Afghans and Russians were not equally responsible for the affray, and whether the actual collision which had taken place was not mainly the result of two forces, both under Oriental or half Oriental command, being each unable to withstand the strain of enforced inactivity while they fretted and chafed in almost adjoining camps. Few indeed there are who will not sympathise with the feelings of the British officers, who on that March morning of 1885 saw the two armies in battle array opposite each other on the banks of the river; and, eager themselves to join in the fray, protested to heaven that they were hampered by the ineptitude of the Government at home. But were obscure and doubtful events such as these in a remote and distant territory to be eagerly seized by statesmen at home, without further inquiry, as the occasion for lighting the torch of the great war from the mere notion of which European diplomacy had long shrunk back appalled?

Sir Peter Lumsden was loud in his complaints, and continued them on his return to England. There was another side to the question, and Lord Granville, as he informed the Queen, thought it right to tell Sir Peter that the tone of many of his communications had been 'such as in rather a long official experience he never remembered as between an officer employed and his official chiefs;' although purposely no notice had been taken of this, as the Government were aware 'of the great difficulties of the

position and of the good service he had done.'[1] Lord Granville asked him in a private interview to state his complaints. He answered, 'generally not following his advice'—'having referred the Pendjeh incident to arbitration'—and 'having insulted him, by answering the Russian Government's complaint of the English officers having passed the river (Oxus) by saying that we did not believe it, and should regret it if they had done so.' Lord Granville pointed out that the Government might have been right or wrong in their policy, but in no case was it an insult to their officers, and that Sir Peter's contention seemed to be that war ought to have been declared at once, in which he could not agree.[2] The weight of responsibility was on Lord Granville's shoulders, and Sir Peter Lumsden seemed unable to appreciate how great the responsibility was.

'Lumsden is an exceedingly bad narrator,' Lord Granville in his turn had to complain; 'a defect doubly fatal in a situation where such clearness of statement as was possible amid complications caused by distance and uncertainties of topography, was eminently desirable.[3] The question of the Zulfikar Pass especially presented great difficulties of detail. The possession of the pass was regarded as a vital matter by the military advisers of the Ameer, indifferent though they were to Pendjeh itself.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

FOREIGN OFFICE, *May* 29, 1885.

'Staal has brought the Russian answer.[4] They agree to everything but the definition of Zulfikar. I do not like to give an opinion without Kimberley, but it looks like denying to the Afghans the full command of the pass.

'I doubt it being possible to leave this point to the arbitrator who is to decide on the point of honour.

'Rosebery was told by Bismarck that the Russians regret their assent to arbitration, and wish to get out of it; so I thought it better

[1] June 2, 1903. Minute by Lord Kimberley, 'I agree,' June 3.

[2] Memorandum of an interview with Sir Peter Lumsden, June 9, 1885.

[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 10, 1885.

[4] M. de Staal was Russian Ambassador.

to clench the matter to-day, and told Staal that as we were agreed upon terms of reference, I would tell him that we accepted the King of Denmark (with reasons). 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

The subsequent negotiations in London were successful in leading to an agreement on the general principles which were to be subsequently worked out in detail on the spot. The boundary thus set out has stood the test of time. The Zulfikar Pass the Government insisted should remain Afghan territory, and in the final demarcation, which took place after Lord Granville had left the Foreign Office, it remained in consequence in the possession of the Ameer.[1]

'The Russian Government itself [Mr. Gladstone wrote to Lord Granville] has sanctioned in terms the basis *Zulfikar contra Pendjeh*, and this is not fulfilled unless there be exclusive control by the Afghans of the main portion of the passage.'[2]

One concession—and no unimportant one—was afterwards made to Russia. In 1886 Russia, basing herself on an old claim of the Khan of Bokhara, claimed the districts of Kerki on the left bank of the Oxus, and the concession was agreed to by Lord Salisbury, and finally ratified in a convention of July 10, 1887.

'With regard to the Afghan boundary question [Lord Granville subsequently wrote], it was as good as settled by us, in the face of violent reproaches that we were making too many concessions to the Russians. But the close to the settlement was arranged by two further concessions on the part of Salisbury.'[3]

Colonel Yate, who had been one of Sir Peter Lumsden's principal assistant commissioners, revisited the district twelve years later, and thus expressed himself: 'It has been supposed by some that we lost territory for the Ameer by giving up Penjdeh, but the tribesmen took a very different view. According to them, miles and miles of land along the

[1] The author of the article on Lord Salisbury in the *Quarterly Review*—an otherwise exceedingly well-informed article—is mistaken in saying that the Government was prepared to surrender the Zulfikar Pass.

[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, June 3, 1885.

[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, December 1, 1889. See some observations on this subject by M. Victor Bérard, *La Révolte de l'Asie*, ch. iii. p. 259.

Herat frontier, which none of them had ever seen or heard of before, had been recovered for them by the commission.' Such had been the result of the predatory Turkoman tribesmen being brought under control. Yet not only would these excellent results have been imperilled, but a great European war would also have taken place, if the British Minister had not been strong enough to withstand the clamours of the streets and the newspapers in March 1885.[1]

'I believe the arrangement with Russia [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. John Walter] is *excellent*, and most honourable to us. But supposing I am quite wrong, and we have made any undue concessions, in order to avoid a most difficult war, the thing is done, or as good as done. The Russian press is naturally blowing the trumpets and beating the big drum in the hopes of appearing to have had a victory. If the influence of the *Times* was confined to England, there is no reason why it should not freely criticise the conduct of the Government if thought worthy of blame. But I can conceive no national object to be obtained by disparaging leading articles, and by leaving unpruned the letters of partisan and uninformed correspondents abroad; the result being to give to Europe, to Russia, and above all to India, the idea that we have been humiliated by our rival.'[2]

Lord Rosebery had meanwhile returned from Berlin, where he had an unofficial exchange of views with Prince Bismarck about Egypt.

'The father [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone] does not deny that he has been thwarting us, but at the end, and especially after seeing Courcelles on his return from Paris, was more conciliatory in his language . . . Rosebery seems to have been reticent and prudent. He threw out as from himself the idea of neutralisation of the Canal. The Prince said he had never heard of it, and should like to consider it.'[3]

During the complicated negotiations described in this chapter, the proposals made by Lord Granville in 1883, in respect to the future international position of the Suez

[1] G. Drage, *Russian Affairs*, p. 514. In 1904, at the time of the Dogger Bank incident, Lord Lansdowne acted in an exactly similar manner, and had to face the same difficulties created by those who again desired without inquiry to precipitate a war with Russia, rather than accept an inquiry by an arbitrator.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. John Walter, May 29, 1885.

[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, April 29, 1885.

Canal, had not unnaturally remained in abeyance, as the attention of diplomacy was fully occupied, during 1884, with the question of the settlement of the financial position. When, however, a proposal was made in the early part of 1885, for another Conference to discuss that subject, Lord Granville informed M. Waddington that he would then make propositions with regard to the Suez Canal in conformity with those contained in the circular of January 3, 1883. He added that Great Britain would also, at the proper time, propose to the Powers and to the Porte a scheme for the neutralisation of Egypt on the basis of the principles applied to Belgium;[1] for in proportion as the question of the future position of the Canal came to be examined, the difficulty of dealing with it, apart from some settlement as to the political status of the territory in which it was situated, became evident. If Egypt could under any circumstances, whether as a quasi-independent State or as a portion of the Ottoman Empire, be a belligerent, or if civil dissensions, such as the rebellion of Arabi, were again to occur, the most serious difficulties might again arise. The second and third of Lord Granville's eight conditions, described in the despatch of January 3, had recognised these difficulties, and sought to apply a remedy. But obviously if Egypt with these rules in existence might still be a belligerent, or if another Arabi were to appear on the political horizon, the difficulties, which had been suggested in a note by Lord Derby in 1877 during the Russo-Turkish War, might nevertheless occur. There was also the further question, how the respect of Egypt herself for any arrangements which she might make was to be permanently secured.

The world knew of the 'neutralisation' of Belgium and of the Black Sea; and it had heard of the neutralisation of the Republic of Cracow. But the essence of those and other analogous arrangements was the exclusion of the military and naval forces of the Powers from entry upon the neutralised territories and seas. Was Great Britain going to consent,

[1] *Egypt*, No. 23, 1884.
[2] Lord Derby to the Russian Ambassador, May 1877.

as the reward of all her exertions, to the exclusion of her ships of war under any circumstances from traversing the Canal on the way to India? Considerations of this kind had induced Lord Granville purposely to avoid the use of the word 'neutralisation' in regard to the Canal in his despatch of January 3, 1883, as it was obviously the policy of Great Britain to aim at the unrestricted admission into the Canal at all times of ships of every kind, whether of war or of commerce, and to press for the exclusion of none.

'Neutralisation,' Lord Derby had said in his place in the House of Lords, 'using the term as it is commonly employed in international documents, would mean that the Canal should not be used at all in times of war for the passage of ships of war of any belligerent.'[1] But to this Great Britain could not agree. Therefore, while the British Foreign Office proposed to neutralise Egypt, it proposed to internationalise the Canal.[2] In the declarations accordingly of March 17, 1885, relative to the financial situation, which led up to the Convention signed in London next day, between the Governments of Great Britain, Germany, Austria-Hungary, France, Italy, Russia, and Turkey, it was placed on record that 'the Powers had agreed to recognise the urgent necessity for negotiating, with the object of sanctioning by a Conventional Act, the establishment of a definite regulation guaranteeing at all times and for all the Powers the freedom of the Suez Canal,'[3] and that it had been agreed that a Commission of Delegates, representing the Powers interested, should meet forthwith in Paris, to prepare and draw up an Act taking for its basis the circular of Lord Granville of January 3, 1883.

The Commission met on March 30. The principal British representative was Sir Julian Pauncefote, whom Lord Granville had appointed Permanent Under Secretary at the Foreign Office on the death of Lord Tenterden in 1882.

'I have the highest opinion of his abilities, character, and industry [he wrote]. He is popular in the office and with the Corps Diplo-

[1] *Hansard*, ccxxxiv. 314, 1877.
[2] Lord Granville to M. Waddington, June 16, 1884; *Egypt*, No. 23, 1884, p. 15.
[3] *Egypt*, 1885, Nos. 6, 7, 11.

matique; an excellent Frenchman and his knowledge of law is constantly of use.'[1]

His colleague was Sir Charles Rivers Wilson, together forming a combination of legal knowledge and financial experience which left no danger of the interests of this country being inadequately protected. France was represented by M. Billot, of the French Foreign Office, and M. Camille Barrère, who for many years had been the French member of the International Commission of the Danube, and had acted as the colleague of M. Tissot at the London Conference of 1883. At the first sitting of the Conference the British and French Commissioners each produced a draft treaty. It at once became apparent that, putting aside minor divergences, there was one essential difference between them. The French draft proposed to constitute a Commission of the delegates of the Powers signatory of the Declaration of London of March 17, and to endow it with powers in regard to the Canal similar to those possessed by the Danube Commission in regard to that river. The English draft proposed to leave to the territorial Power the duty of supervising and enforcing the free navigation of the Canal. It was in substance a repetition of the Russian case in regard to the Kilia mouth of the Danube.[2] Both drafts were referred to a Sub-Commission, in which not only was the French proposal maintained, but a surreptitious attempt was also made to limit the right of the Sultan and the Khédive to invoke foreign assistance 'for the defence of Egypt and the maintenance of public order.'[3] Around these points the debates continued for a prolonged period. The foreign delegates, with one exception, all ranged themselves on the side of the French proposals. The Italian delegate stood alone in pointing out that, whether it was desirable or not to establish an international supervision of the Canal, there was one marked distinction between the case of the mouths of the Danube and the Canal, arising

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 1, 1882.

[2] See vol. ii. p. 242 *supra*.

[3] Sitting of June 8; *Egypt*, No. 19, 1885, p. 256.

from the fact of the existence of the Canal Company, which had executed the works, and was entrusted with those very duties of supervision to provide for which the Danube Commission had been originally called into existence. 'In ordinary circumstances,' he observed, 'the proposed Commission could possess neither administrative nor technical functions: the Canal Company is alone entrusted with these two duties, and it requires no assistance to carry them out.' He accordingly proposed an amended article as a compromise, to the effect that the representatives at Cairo of the Powers signatory of the Declaration of London of that year should

'form themselves into a Commission under the presidency of the Turkish delegate, assisted by the Egyptian delegate, to organise the arrangements for the protection of the Canal, and to come to an understanding with the Canal Company, with a view of insuring the observance of the regulations respecting navigation and police, whenever a war shall break out, or an internal revolt menaces the safety of the Canal.' [1]

Ultimately, in the hope of conciliating the majority, the Italian proposal was modified, and under special instructions from London was proposed by the British delegates, in the following shape :—

'The representatives in Egypt of the Powers signatory of the present Treaty shall watch over its execution, and inform their respective Governments without delay of every violation or danger of violation which may arise. In case of war or of internal troubles or other events threatening the safety or the free passage through the Canal, they shall assemble, on the summons of one of their number, to proceed with the necessary verification. They shall inform their respective Governments of the proposals which may appear to them advisable to insure the protection and the free use of the Canal.' [2]

But although the divergence of opinion, which had originally separated the British and Italian delegates from their

[1] *Egypt*, No. 19, p. 198. These questions were not finally settled till 1904, when they formed part of the settlement of all outstanding questions between France and Great Britain made by M. Delcassé and Lord Lansdowne in that year.

[2] *Egypt*, No. 19, p. 105.

colleagues, was thus reduced, there did not appear to be any prospect of complete agreement, and, in the opinion of the President of the Conference, the best plan, after taking all the facts of the situation into account, was 'to abide by the results obtained, and to submit to the Powers the two drafts before the Commission.' This suggestion having been adopted, the Commission separated on June 13.

The discussions around the so-called neutralisation of the Canal had only emphasised the fact that any attempt to stamp on it an international character while it remained within a weak State not itself neutral, was a difficult task, but the larger issue was necessarily abandoned with the comparative failure of the more limited proposals relating to the Canal itself.[1] Almost simultaneously with the termination of the sittings of the Conference, the Government of Mr. Gladstone fell. A vote on one of the clauses of the Budget had taken place, and the Government found themselves in a minority. They at once resigned. 'Hartington,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Spencer, 'wishes to take this opportunity of the fall of the Government for retiring for ever from politics.'[2] The Duke of Argyll he feared would join the Tories.

'You are mistaken [the Duke replied to an expression of this fear]. There are several deep ruts between them and me.

'But I am determined to do all I can to prevent Liberalism running off on tracks which I think false and dangerous. My great difference with you is in the (I think) overweening value you set on party "fidelity." I have sometimes asked myself, "Is there any conceivable measure that Granville would *not* accept rather than split the party?" and I have never been able to answer this question to my own satisfaction.'[3]

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *July* 11, 1885.

'MY DEAR ARGYLL,—Many thanks for writing to me.

'One of the greatest drawbacks in later Cabinets has been the diminution of personal friends among one's colleagues. I am

[1] Lawrence, *Essays on International Law*, p. 74.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, June 20, 1885.

[3] Duke of Argyll to Lord Granville, July 9, 1885.

sincerely glad that the impression which I formed yesterday evening has no foundation.

'My joy is quite disinterested, as your powerful attacks are much more effective from our than from the opposite side. But I am convinced the change would be a mistake for yourself.

'The chief result of the late crisis is to benefit Chamberlain, Churchill, and Parnell. Are you quite sure that the mode you adopt for preventing Liberalism running off on tracks which you think false and dangerous will not have the contrary effect?

'I could if I chose give you instances of when I have disagreed with Gladstone, and upon which I may disagree with him again; but I am convinced that as long as he remains a political leader he is a *Conservative* power which will not be replaced by Salisbury, Churchill, or some of the best Whigs. 'Yours, G.'

Lord Granville now took what was to be his final farewell of the Foreign Office. One who had served under him for many years in a confidential post, and had had a long and varied experience of the heads of great Government offices, said of him that 'he was an excellent administrator:' chiefly because when in office if 'he had a good man under him, he trusted him while holding all the threads in his own hands.'[1] It was another valuable quality, and one which secured him the willing co-operation of the diplomatic service, that he had the gift of being very tender to the occasional mistakes of those whom he considered the possessors of real ability, thinking that such mistakes resembled the capers of a high-spirited horse. The presence of brilliant men added, in his opinion, to the reputation of the diplomatic service, even if occasionally blunders were committed. A famous minister, long the terror of every orthodox head of a department, was thus enabled to crown his career with a great Embassy; and to justify the belief of his friends that he only required an important post to give full scope to abilities which had found no sufficient field or adequate opportunity at obscure German Courts, or even in the Iberian Peninsula, where 'the difficulties of the Tichborne family seemed nothing,' Lord Granville had observed, 'compared with those which environed his diplo-

[1] Notes by Sir Robert Meade, 1891.

matic position.'[1] These pages have already borne witness to the perseverance with which the claims of Sir Henry Layard were defended. Owing to chivalrous instincts of the same order another great Oriental traveller, who comparatively late in life had re-entered the diplomatic service under the ægis of Lord Salisbury, and had proceeded to alarm every potentate to whom he was accredited, from Sofia to Bankok, was allowed to terminate his career in peace in a South American Legation, instead of being consigned to the rest and retirement which a more pedantic chief would probably have considered that he had amply earned.

On the other hand, it must be acknowledged that Lord Granville did not always 'suffer fools gladly,' or those whom he thought to be bores. He once wrote a letter of quite exceptional bitterness in regard to a strange fancy which had seized the Emperor of the French in 1859, of entrusting a confidential mission to Vienna to a well-known English peer once connected for a time with the Foreign Office, whom the House of Lords regarded as the prince of wearisome talkers; and he never could be persuaded that another peer and ex-Ambassador, who on the Continent was justly regarded as one of the ablest diplomatists Great Britain possessed, could be anything except the nuisance which he was considered to be on the red benches, or that there could be any possible advantage in recalling him to the public service in 1884.

Believing that the first duty of a Foreign Secretary is to keep up the strength and reputation of the diplomatic service, Lord Granville never hesitated under exceptional circumstances to reinforce that service from outside when the occasion seemed to require it. The judicious mixture of selection from without and promotion from within the service, caused the representation of the country abroad to be singularly strong between 1880 and 1885, when first Mr. Goschen and then Lord Dufferin were Ambassadors at Constantinople, Lord Ampthill at Berlin, and Lord Lyons in Paris, and Sir Evelyn Baring was Consul-General in

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, May 17, 1871.

Egypt. With Lord Salisbury, Lord Granville will share the credit of having broken down the wall between the Consular and the Diplomatic Service in order to recognise the great abilities of Sir William White;[1] and he refused to be prevented from appointing Sir Julian Pauncefote to the highest permanent post in the Foreign Office by the objection that it was contrary to received tradition, because Sir Julian Pauncefote was originally neither a Foreign Office clerk nor a diplomatist, but a member of the Colonial Civil Service, and by profession a lawyer.

If such decisions offended some while they pleased others, Lord Granville consoled himself with the reflection that this was the way of the world, and that it was impossible to satisfy everybody. There always had been, and always would be, somebody in existence persuaded that 'he would have been a Peer, an Ambassador, and a Grand Cross,' had it not been for the folly and want of appreciation of the Foreign Secretary for the time being.[2] The denunciations which occasionally penetrated the inner recesses of the Foreign Office had to be tolerated in good humour, and treated like those of Lord Randolph Churchill, who during the Egyptian troubles reflected on Lord Granville in terms of extraordinary bitterness, both in and out of Parliament, in speech and in writing. Lord Lathom, a friend of both, tried to explain the matter away. He suggested to Lord Granville that he had played chess with Lord Randolph and found him an agreeable companion; and that he did not believe there was any wish on Lord Randolph's part, notwithstanding the violence of his language, to fix a personal quarrel on Lord Granville by expressions which might, he hoped, be taken in a Pickwickian sense.

'After the famous quarrel between Lord George Bentinck and Charles Greville [Lord Granville replied], the latter said that it was impossible they could ever be on speaking terms again, but that it would be convenient if they could get on betting terms. I gather that Lord Randolph would quite agree with me, that

[1] Afterwards Ambassador at Constantinople.

[2] Lord Granville to Lord Odo Russell, February 27, 1874.

a statement that the letter had been written in haste would keep us not only on speaking, but on chess-playing terms.'

And so the matter ended.[1]

It is not uninteresting to observe that the foreign policy of Lord Salisbury, who succeeded Lord Granville, and, with the exception of the brief and troubled existence of the third and fourth Administrations of Mr. Gladstone and of Lord Rosebery, controlled the policy of Great Britain abroad without interruption from 1885 to 1900, passed through exactly the same successive phases as that of his predecessor. Encouraged in 1886 by the existence of a friendly Ministry in France, he, like Lord Granville, began by attempting a *rapprochement* with France; and, in order to gain her good-will, even went so far as to negotiate a treaty with the Porte for the evacuation of Egypt. But Lord Salisbury, like Lord Granville, soon discovered that the susceptibilities of France in regard to Egypt were by no means yet allayed, and that the ephemeral character of French Ministries still presented a hopeless obstacle to any continuity of policy on their part. If the French Assembly hurled a Ministry from office in 1882, when it was proposed to accept the invitation of the British Government to co-operate in regard to the Suez Canal, the French Government itself pursued an equally suicidal policy in 1886, when it met the proposals of the Drummond Wolff Convention for the evacuation of Egypt with determined hostility. Soon after the fall of the third Administration of Mr. Gladstone, Lord Salisbury, once more installed in power, recognised the necessity of an *entente* with Germany,[2] and for many years to come the position of Great Britain in Egypt had to depend on the good-will of the Triple Alliance, and of Germany in particular, which in that Alliance held the prerogative vote.

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Lathom, June 30, 1884.

[2] See the article on Lord Salisbury in the *Quarterly Review* for October 1902.

## CHAPTER XIII

### HOME RULE

### 1885–1886

In the midst of the events recorded in the previous chapter, on January 19, 1885, Lord Granville's sister, Lady Georgiana Fullerton, died. Mr. Gladstone's sincere admiration for her talents as an authoress, their near agreement on religious subjects—though the one had crossed and the other had refused to cross the line between Canterbury and Rome—and the political agreement which united Mr. Gladstone to her brother, had forged a strong bond of friendship between her and the Prime Minister. 'In a letter written last April,' so Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone on the day of his sister's decease, 'a letter to be given to me after she had passed away, I find these words: "Will you give a kind message from me to Mr. Gladstone and tell him I pray for him?"'[1] The religious sympathies and opinions of Lady Georgiana Fullerton at a very early period of her life had caused her—differing in this from most English Roman Catholics—to adopt very advanced opinions in regard to the changes necessary to be made in the government of Ireland;[2] and at the time of her death Mr. Gladstone was already meditating the decisive step which was to make some rejoice and others pray, and was to settle the fate of the Liberal party for many long years to come.

The condition of Ireland in the spring of 1885 was, it

[1] January 19, 1885.

[2] *Life of Lady Georgiana Fullerton*, pp. 288–289, 494. In 1884 Lord Granville, possibly inspired by Lady Georgiana Fullerton, erected a memorial at Ebbs Fleet to mark the spot where St. Augustine held his first interview with King Ethelbert. See the article from the *Tablet* printed in the Appendix.

has been seen, the chief remaining source of anxiety to the Government.

'I am afraid [Mr. Gladstone wrote in May to Lord Granville] that our Irish policy is going to blossom into heavy obstruction, and a block of business complicated by the Budget, and by the wrath of the Tories against us for the unpardonable sin of making peace with Russia.'[1]

Grave dissensions had arisen in the Cabinet. They were concerned with the renewal of the Coercion Act, with the introduction of a Land Purchase Bill, and the question of Local and County Government. Some members of the Cabinet—Lord Granville was one of them—wished to revive an old plan of Lord John Russell's, to create Provincial Boards in each of the four great provinces of Ireland. There was also a proposal to establish a Central Administrative Board at Dublin, based on indirect election by the County Boards, of which Mr. Chamberlain was the principal sponsor, and said to be backed by Mr. Parnell and Cardinal Manning. Early in June a crisis arose over the question of the renewal of the Act giving special powers for the maintenance of law and order in Ireland: whether it was to be renewed at all, and if so, to what extent. Two ministers resigned, and then suspended their resignation in the hope that a way might be found out of the difficulty. A third minister showed signs of joining them. While efforts were being made to secure agreement, an amendment on the Budget Bill was carried on June 8 against the Government. Then, after a few more chequered days of existence spent in a last effort to float the ship off the rocks, the second Administration of Mr. Gladstone came to an end.[2]

Lord Salisbury after some hesitation accepted the task of

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, May 19, 1885.

[2] The exact history of the various proposals in the Cabinet for some extended form of Irish self-government is difficult to fix exactly. In Mr. Morley's *Life of Mr. Gladstone*, iii. 194, it is stated that the proposal for an Administrative Central Board came before the Cabinet on May 9; and that Lord Granville voted for it in the minority. But in the speech on April 14, 1886, at the National Liberal Club (see page 484), Lord Granville distinctly says that he declined to support it, as either going too far or not far enough, and the letters in this chapter point to the same conclusion.

forming a Government, while not possessing a majority in the House of Commons. Owing to the passing of the Reform Act, it could only be a few months before a General Election would be necessary, and the Conservative party determined to take the risks of the uncertain future, after receiving assurances that they would meet with no unreasonable opposition in carrying on the ordinary business of the existing Parliament during what was left to it of life.

'I begin to think that our chief will face the new Parliament after all. He is well aware that without him we shall go to pieces.'[1] Thus, in June 1885, Lord Derby wrote to Lord Granville. The new Government held office by so precarious a tenure, that speculations as to what would follow their fall began almost on the very day on which they accepted office, and active communications went on between the members of the old Cabinet, in order to ascertain whether the differences about the government of Ireland, which had been the real cause of their disappearance from office far more than the question of finance, could not be arranged. The new Cabinet also was not without hope of being itself able to devise some scheme.

The desire of the people of Ireland for self-government had passed through many phases since in 1800 they had lost the fruits of the victory which Grattan had obtained in 1782 in the recognition of their claim to complete legislative independence. That this claim was founded on historical right, had been admitted by the Liberal statesmen of 1782. But it was seen even then that there were subjects which the geographical position of the two countries, their past history and their industrial interests, rendered it desirable should be recognised as common property. Ireland was too near to be a State connected with Great Britain by the tie of the Crown only, having regard to the external relations of both countries; she was too distant to be altogether incorporated with Great Britain, having regard to the efficient management of her own internal affairs. But the circumstances of the time had been too strong, and had prevented a

[1] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, June 1, 1885.

sufficient recognition of these facts in the arrangement made in 1782.

What was the view which the Whig Ministers at that time took of the relations which it was desirable to establish between Great Britain and Ireland—the relations which, had events been more favourable, they would have themselves established? The object, the Duke of Portland explained in a secret despatch of June 6, was that an Act of Parliament should be passed by the Legislatures of the respective kingdoms, by which 'the superintending power and supremacy' of Great Britain in all matters of State and general commerce would be effectively acknowledged; by which a share of the expense in carrying on a defensive or offensive war, either in support of our dominions or those of our allies, would be borne by Ireland in proportion to her ability, and security be taken that she should adopt every regulation judged necessary by Great Britain for the better ordering or securing her trade and commerce with foreign nations, or her own colonies or dependencies.[1] 'This plan,' Lord Shelburne explained during the debates of 1799, 'had nothing to do with a legislative union.' 'It related,' he said, 'to what might be called the expense of the system which was carried on under the two Parliaments, in army, navy, commerce, and finance, and in the great establishments of Church and State; and it did not imply "bringing the two Parliaments together."'[2]

The Whig statesmen aimed in fact at obtaining, in the first place, a clear acknowledgment of the Imperial supremacy, or, as they would have said in the language of the time, of the power of Great Britain in 'external' as distinct from 'internal' legislation; and, in the next place, a contribution from Ireland to the expenses of this external administration and policy: the fleet, the army, and the diplomatic and commercial establishments. 'I humbly conceive,' said Burke, who was a member of the Rockingham Government, and

[1] *Life of Lord Shelburne*, iii. 150.

[2] *Parliamentary History*, xxxiv. 675–678; *Memoirs of the Whig Party*, by Lord Holland, 1847, i. 147; *Life of Lord Shelburne*, iii. 554, 555.

the trusted adviser of his official chief, 'that the whole of the superior, and what I should call Imperial politics, ought to have its residence here [in London]; and that Ireland, locally, civilly, and commercially independent, ought politically to look up to Great Britain in all matters of peace or war, and, in a word, with her to live and die. At bottom, Ireland has no other choice—I mean no other rational choice.' [1]

The objection to the plan—and it had frequently been pointed out—was that if Ireland were to be asked, and were even to consent for the moment to make an appreciable contribution to the common expenses of the Empire, without being given a share in the parliamentary control of the funds voted and in the discussion of Imperial affairs—if, in other words, she were made a tribute-paying colony, instead of being treated as a member of a Federal system—a fresh and formidable grievance would quickly arise, on the ground that taxation without representation was contrary to the first principles of the Constitution. With these considerations present to his mind, Mr. Butt, when leader of the Irish Home Rule party, in the days prior to Mr. Parnell's leadership, had proposed that a Federal arrangement should be instituted between Great Britain and Ireland—i.e. an arrangement under which Great Britain and Ireland should agree to vest certain powers in a purely Irish Legislature, and certain others in the Imperial Parliament. Mr. Sharman Crawford, who, like Mr. Butt, was an Ulsterman and a Protestant, held similar views at an earlier epoch, and had put them prominently forward during the period which elapsed between the imprisonment of O'Connell and the collapse of the first Tenant-right movement.

Confidence in the possibility of establishing a Federal connection between Great Britain and Ireland—that is to say, an arrangement under which certain powers would be vested in an Irish Legislature and Executive, and certain others in a Parliament and Executive common to both countries—implied not only a belief that such a division could be successfully made upon paper, but also a belief that public

[1] *Letters on the Affairs of Ireland*, 1797.

opinion in Ireland would not interpose obstacles to the assertion of the reserved rights and powers of the Imperial Legislature and Executive. Convinced that such obstacles would be found, Lord Granville in 1885 had come to the conclusion that if a decisive step had to be taken, the precedents of 1782 would have to be taken for guidance, rather than the more modern experience gained from the Federal Constitution of the United States of America, the Canadian Confederation, and the German Empire. In the plans, equally complicated and far less founded on any general principle, which Mr. Chamberlain had advocated in the last days of Mr. Gladstone's second Government, for the establishment of a Central Board or General Council, he felt no confidence. He none the less admitted the enormous risks of putting a great constitutional change before the public, and acknowledged his leaning to the larger plan to be so far merely comparative. What he called 'the Chamberlain-Parnell-Manning scheme' seemed to him 'to combine all the disadvantages.'[1] 'You seem,' Mr. Gladstone wrote to him, 'to be on the same lines as Parnell in rejecting the smaller and repudiating the larger scheme.'[2]

From communications with Lord Derby, Mr. Gladstone thought that he could identify his opinions with those of Lord Granville. But the minds of Lord Derby and Lord Granville were travelling rapidly in opposite directions. Lord Derby expressed the view distinctly, that if anything were granted to Ireland beyond local self-government, it might be better in that case to treat her like the Dominion of Canada, but he was unalterably opposed to any proposal of the kind.[3] Lord Granville had meanwhile thrown together a few rough notes pointing to a very different conclusion.

*Memorandum.*

'Dublin Castle rules with no support. Irish representatives have no share of administration. Education has changed a passive discontent with English government into a determination to manage

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, August 14, 1885.
[2] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, August 6, 1885.
[3] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, August 14, 1885.

their own affairs. American Irish connection and combined literature have had a marked effect. The economic condition of the country is bad. The masses feel their power and use it. The Irish representatives, supported by an immense majority of the population and by the Irish hierarchy, ask for a separate Irish Parliament.

'Landlords cry out for coercion. The extreme press denounce the English, and cry for separation.

'Protestants assert that the Church of Rome is at the bottom of it. Others assert that the land question is really the only one.

'Strong desire in the North to maintain union. Parnell supported by four-fifths of population demands Irish Parliament. Is the opinion of Irish representatives to be ignored?

'It is asserted that they are rebels. What is to be the course?

'The integrity of the Empire must be maintained, but whatever is fair and just to Ireland must be advantageous to England.

'Parnell's plan gives power to raise their own revenue. The Irish are at the mercy of the English with regard to their markets.

'1. How to prevent separation?

'2. How to find safeguards?

'3. How to provide against bad administration?

'No. 1. Ireland would have no power to raise local forces.

'Great Britain would retain those required, and for the present the Irish Constabulary. Ireland would have no greater power to harbour enemy's troops than now.

'2. Requires consolidation of the Constitution.

'3. Not hopeless. Great advantage of withdrawing Irish members from English Parliament.

'Conciliatory measures impossible, with Irish party banded against instead of in favour of these: state of country will get worse and less fit for self-government.'

A new and unexpected element had been introduced into the situation by some remarkable declarations made in Parliament by Lord Carnarvon, the new Lord Lieutenant, and Sir Michael Hicks-Beach, the new leader of the House of Commons, emphatically repudiating any further reliance on a policy of coercion as the mainstay of Irish government. Insinuations were even attempted to be made in some cases by those who only a few months before had been loudest in their demands for a pitiless enforcement of the law—that it was the unnecessary severity, not the weakness, of Lord

Spencer's Administration, which was the real cause of trouble in Ireland. Loud and angry protests were, however, heard from the rank and file of the Conservative party. It seemed evident to them that some unavowed negotiation, some secret understanding, was on foot between the Government and Mr. Parnell, as the consideration for the votes of his supporters which had already decided the fall of Mr. Gladstone's Government in the division on the Budget. In this quarter, the tendency was to make an opposite criticism to that just described, and, as of old, to express the belief that Lord Spencer had erred by excessive leniency.

'Do you observe the last dodge? [Lord Granville wrote to him;] it is to lay all the blame upon you for allowing the National League to rise out of the Land League.'[1]

In England meanwhile Mr. Chamberlain had started a campaign in favour of what came to be termed the 'unauthorised programme,' consisting of a series of projected reforms connected chiefly with land tenure and allotments. These proposals, which, had they been more closely examined, would have been seen to be innocuous and almost meaningless, excited nevertheless, by the terms in which they were expressed, a feeling of deep alarm in the breasts of timid politicians, being clothed in vague language, and suggesting larger ideas than the circumscribed proposals themselves at all warranted. On August 7 an interview took place between Mr. Gladstone and Lord Hartington to discuss the situation.

'I never can understand Mr. Gladstone in conversation [Lord Hartington wrote the following day], but I thought him unusually unintelligible yesterday. However, I understood him to be under the impression that both you and Lord Derby would prefer a larger scheme which would take the Irish representatives out of the House of Commons, to the Central Council plan which would leave them in it. I do not know whether he is right in this. I don't think you will get any support for the Provincial Councils. I think Mr. G.'s state of mind about Ireland is extremely alarming. He seems to consider the Central Board plan the minimum which might have

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, January 16, 1886.

sufficed; but that as that plan appears to have collapsed, a separate Legislature in some form or other will have to be considered. Resistance to any further demands for separation, and equal treatment with England and Scotland, he does not seem to consider a practical policy. I suppose that as a united party under such conditions is an impossibility, he will not go on. This I should not much regret, but he will probably say something before he retires which will greatly strengthen the Irish demands. On other questions he seemed to be tolerably reasonable, though vague. I should expect that if he spoke he would discourage a good many of Chamberlain's proposals.' [1]

Mr. and Mrs. Gladstone had gone on board the *Sunbeam* in August with Sir Thomas and Lady Brassey for a cruise in the North Sea, and for a time there was a political truce.

'The longer I think of it and the more I hear [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone on his return], the more I am convinced that the only hope of the Liberal party . . . is in your retaining the lead at all events for a time. I cannot doubt that this is the opinion of all the late Cabinet. The question remains as to how much of a platform need be announced, and whether it would be agreed to by the principal persons in the Cabinet.' [2]

Parliament was about to be dissolved, and the great question was, would Mr. Gladstone go to the country as leader of the party, and intending to accept office again, if a Liberal majority were returned? Through the lines of the rather Delphic epistles which Mr. Gladstone addressed to Lord Hartington could be read tolerably clearly the intention of the writer to make a new departure in Ireland on a large scale, and an unwillingness to return to power except for that purpose.

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

*September* 10, 1885.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—I have had two letters from Mr. Gladstone since his return; the last this morning. I gather that his Address is ready and in the form of a pamphlet. He appears to be

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, August 8, 1885.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, September 9, 1885.

chiefly occupied with Ireland, and though I do not know his views in detail there are indications which in my opinion are most alarming.

'I had proposed a meeting of some of the late Cabinet; he gives various reasons against and says that the only thing it could decide is whether we wish him to take a share in the election. This especially after my (first) letter he is disposed to assume; and if so the only course is for him, knowing my views and being about to know Chamberlain's, to express his own opinions formally for what they are worth, &c.

'I agree with you that if we want a Liberal majority we should keep Mr. Gladstone as leader, but I have had to tell him in my letter to-day that if his opinions about Ireland are what I infer them to be, my desire for unity in the party under his leadership is subject to very serious qualifications.

'I have offered to go and see him; but am in hopes that he won't accept this offer, as I can never get on with him in conversation.

'I will send you the correspondence as soon as I can, but I may want it now for reference.

'I am in good hopes that, between him and Chamberlain, I may shortly be released from active politics. 'Yours,

'HARTINGTON.'

Gradually the breach was becoming more and more distinctly visible. Some made efforts to cover it up; others sought to ignore it. It soon became abundantly clear to Lord Granville that the last chance of avoiding the break-up of the party was to put off a final decision both as to leadership and policy until 'the pressure of actual necessity arose,'[1] and that a meeting of the ex-Cabinet would only increase the confusion. The election campaign was proceeding, and in proportion as opinions were becoming more defined, their mutual incompatibility became more and more evident. Mr. Gladstone in a letter to Lord Granville indicated his unwillingness to resume office except in order to deal with the Irish question, though he avoided stating what his scheme would be, and even if he had a scheme. At the same time he expressed his extreme desire to keep the party together, and said that he looked to Lord Granville as

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, October 21, 1885.

'one holding a position of great impartiality in regard to divergent opinions,'[1] and therefore destined to be the honest broker.

'The first difficulty [Lord Granville replied] is whom to consult. Perhaps Hartington and Chamberlain separately. Beyond that the selection is difficult, and the whole ex-Cabinet, particularly without you, is objectionable.'[2]

With reference to the future he told Mr. Gladstone that with some reserves as to details he still believed 'the whole party would support him as Prime Minister,' but as Lord Hartington and Mr. Chamberlain for different reasons were not anxious to come into office, he 'he thought it probable the government would go back to the Tories.'[3]

By this time Mr. Gladstone had issued his election address. It was a document which did not dispel the Homeric mist of uncertainty which enveloped his intentions. It raised many questions, but seemed to speak from the point of view of a spectator rather than an actor in future events, except—and even here the note was uncertain—in regard to Ireland.

'Although you have a right to dictate your own terms [Lord Granville wrote to him], are you not rather on the edge of a razor, when you state willingness to undertake Ireland under possible circumstances, but will not give a helping hand with regard to the important subjects you have recommended to the nation?'[4]

Lord Hartington was thankful for small mercies.

'Knowing Mr. Gladstone's ideas about Ireland [he wrote], I was thankful that the Address was no worse on that subject. On all the other points of difference among us, his attitude seems to be one of absolute neutrality. Of course in the long run the active men will have their own way, and the future Liberal party will be Radical. I see nothing for the Whigs but to disappear or turn Tories. I think I should prefer the former.'[5]

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, October 5, 1885.

[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 6, 1885.

[3] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 9, 1885; to Lord Hartington, October 13, 1885.

[4] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 6, 1885.

[5] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, October 3, 1885.

Early in October Lord Derby had gone to visit Mr. Gladstone at Hawarden.

'I found him [he wrote to Lord Granville] 'principally occupied with Irish affairs, and his language upon them was a surprise to me. He said he had been studying the subject a good deal; that he had come to the conclusion that the Union was a mistake: that Pitt had assigned no sufficient justification for *destroying the national life of Ireland*: that he did not hold the popular theory that a single executive could not co-exist with two independent legislatures (witness Norway and Sweden, Austria and Hungary): he did not believe the Irish irreconcilable: thought they would have accepted moderate terms till R. Churchill came into power: now nothing less than a Parliament of their own would satisfy them: the question was becoming urgent: the Irish were better organised than ever: we could not go on with eighty or ninety of them in the House of Commons—the state of that body now was a disgrace, and it would be worse in the new Parliament.

'Of course this is not even a *résumé* of a conversation which lasted an hour, and it is possible that my brief report (like a telegram) may give undue importance to phrases which would be less significant taken with the context. But I cannot be mistaken in the general meaning and purport of what passed—that our chief is making up his mind to some form of Home Rule as what he will himself accept and recommend to the party.

'This is a new departure with a vengeance, and I had rather express no opinion upon it as yet. I understand what passed between us to be confidential, but there was no injunction of secrecy, and I cannot do wrong in communicating upon it with you.

'I shall not be surprised if Ireland breaks up both parties. It will certainly break up the Conservatives if Churchill gets his way.'[1]

Two public utterances during the election campaign distinguished themselves from all others by their importance; and they came, as was fitting, from the two great political leaders. At Newport, on October 7, Lord Salisbury made a speech, a leading passage in which distinctly pointed in the direction of the establishment in Ireland of 'a large central authority,' in which 'the wisdom of several parts of the country will correct the folly and mistakes of one.' A subsequent part of the speech qualified this

[1] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, October 2, 1885.

statement by a declaration that the Conservative party would none the less never depart from those 'clear and distinct traditions' which it had always held in regard to 'larger organic questions' connected with the government of Ireland. This mysterious speech following the declarations of policy by Sir Michael Hicks-Beach and Lord Carnarvon on their assumption of office, and taken in connection with the obscure negotiations between the Lord Lieutenant and the Irish leaders, which were rumoured—and as it subsequently appeared with good foundation — to be taking place in London at this time, were sufficient to obtain a transfer of the Irish vote at the polls to the Conservative candidates, under an order to that effect issued in a manifesto from Mr. Parnell on November 21. Meanwhile, on November 9, Mr. Gladstone in Mid Lothian had made a declaration in which he distinctly laid it down as obvious beyond any possibility of dispute, that 'a demand from Ireland for larger powers of self-government' would have to be dealt with by the Parliament about to meet; and this declaration he emphasised in subsequent speeches.

The results of the election produced an almost equal balance between the two great political parties in Great Britain. Two things were evident: that the Irish held the balance, and that the hopes of the supporters of Mr. Chamberlain had been disappointed in regard to English reforms. 'You may imagine that *my* heart is not broken,' Lord Hartington wrote to Lord Granville before the elections were actually over, but when their general result was already clear. 'I see plenty of difficulties before us, but none I think so great as would have been those of an attempt to get our miscellaneous team into harness again.'[1]

The month of December was largely occupied in conferences between Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, Lord Hartington, Lord Rosebery, and Lord Spencer at various country houses, at Hawarden, at Walmer, at Chatsworth. But agreement became no nearer in consequence. 'It is a case of between the devil and the deep sea,' Mr. Gladstone wrote

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, November 29, 1885.

to Lord Granville. He could only see consolation in the misfortunes of the Government, in comparison with whom he thought the Liberal leaders were 'on a bed of roses;'[1] and taking advantage of these misfortunes he made an offer to Lord Salisbury through Mr. Balfour that the question of the future government of Ireland should be taken up by Lord Salisbury with a pledge of support from Mr. Gladstone, in the hope that 'Lord Salisbury with Mr. Gladstone's help would settle the Irish question as Peel with the help of the Whigs settled the question of corn.'[2] But these overtures met with no friendly response.

Thrown back on his own resources, Mr. Gladstone then made a guarded communication of his ideas about Ireland to Lord Hartington, and the latter informed Lord Granville of them, adding, however, that he saw little prospect of agreement, and intimating the probability of a public statement on his own part.

'Whatever is decided upon by the Government or by the Opposition [Lord Granville wrote in reply], whether (1) coercion, (2) concession, or (3) leaving things alone, may probably lead to a great catastrophe. It seems to be only common prudence for you to avoid any step which may hereafter be described as the cause. I gather from your telegram of to-day that nothing will appear to-morrow. I am heartily glad of this. I do not see how you could possibly launch a public declaration just after the receipt of a secret communication from Gladstone, who seems to have told you much more than he has done to others.

'What I think you have a right to ask is, that he should publish nothing without giving you warning.

'Goschen is a strong man, and of great ability. He will be of immense use to you, either in a Cabinet or in Opposition councils. What are his views as to the three alternative policies which I mentioned above?

'There is a fourth which would give Provincial Councils. But when I spoke favourably of these, you effectually shut me up by pointing out that this plan would be supported by no one.

'If anybody is to make a declaration, I am the person, because I am quoted as approving the plans attributed to Gladstone. You are described as objecting to them.

[1] Mr. Gladstone to Lord Granville, December 9, 1885.

[2] *Life of Gladstone*, iii. 259.

'To me the two great difficulties are how the rights of minorities and of landlords are to be saved.

'The great bribe to me, and I expect to England and Scotland, would be to get rid of the Irish M.P.s here, who are introducing the dry rot into our institutions.'[1]

It was at this moment that communications, apparently inspired from Hawarden, began to be read in some specially favoured newspapers claiming to be able to announce authoritatively that Mr. Gladstone would accept office and would introduce a Home Rule Bill for Ireland, and professing to make these statements on the authority of Mr. Herbert Gladstone.

'I am much impressed and oppressed by the gravity of the position of the Irish question [Lord Spencer wrote to Lord Granville, discussing how far such statements could be warranted]. Northbrook came here for Sunday, and we had a very thorough discussion. He admitted that there was considerable force in my plea for a large measure, but he was very strong on the necessity of the greatest caution in procedure.

'He thought that it would be almost impossible for Hartington to agree to a big measure; he was already accused of not sticking to his guns, and Northbrook thought that Hartington could not afford to go back again from what the public understood to be his policy on Ireland as expressed at Belfast.

'Northbrook also pressed the view that if this question could not be settled at once, it ought not to be attempted, as the disasters which would flow from an abortive attempt to settle it would be enormous.

'I get letters from Ireland in despair at the state of the country *re* law and order, and also as to political prospects. The difficulties of settling the question certainly increase on facing it.'[2]

To this letter Lord Granville replied as follows:—

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD SPENCER.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *December* 20, 1885.

'MY DEAR SPENCER,—Instead of answering you this afternoon, I have been writing volumes to Hartington to implore him not to issue an announcement to-morrow, which after a conversation with

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Hartington, December 20, 1885.

[2] Lord Spencer to Lord Granville, December 17, 1885.

Goschen he had as good as settled to do. A telegram this morning leads me to hope he is wavering. I agree with you as to the black character of the outlook. And a great catastrophe may result from either Government or Opposition going in for coercion, concession, or leaving things alone.

'In such a state of things, I should be very sorry that any friend of mine should be what might be described as one of the causes. I still agree with you, that I do not object to concession, if the minority and the landlords can be secured. Gladstone says he has discussed this with you, but I do not gather from either of you that you have come to any conclusion.

'The bribe to me and I suspect to Great Britain which would have most effect, would be to get rid of the Irish members from the House of Commons, into which they are introducing dry rot. Gladstone was rather yielding on this in my last conversation, but Wolverton, who saw him later, does not think so. 'Yours, G.'

Lord Melbourne, Lord Derby now reminded Lord Granville, was reported to have said about the influence of corn laws on prices: 'It don't matter a d—— which line we take, but we had better all be in one story.' Of all plans for dealing with the Irish difficulty, a Local Parliament, subject to a veto from Westminster, was, he repeated,

'the most impracticable. It is restoring the state of things which Grattan and the Volunteers put an end to a hundred years ago. We should not dare to exercise the veto; and either it would be an empty form intended to delude the English public, or it would serve as the starting-point of a new agitation. You may say I am fighting an imaginary opponent: I hope it is so.'

The English public, he was convinced, 'would have none of it,' and he was still more convinced that 'the Liberal party would be nowhere if they supported it.'[1] There was no doubt as to the story which he meant 'to be in.'

To Lord Derby, Lord Granville replied as follows:—

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD DERBY.

WALMER CASTLE, *December* 27, 1885.

'MY DEAR DERBY,—As usual you hit several nails hard on their heads.

'The question which Lord Melbourne asked, whether the

[1] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, December 17, 25, 27, 1885.

Government were to say that Free Trade would make corn dearer or cheaper, was one which it was not absolutely necessary to answer. Is not this rather the case with the interpretation to be given to the *Standard* announcement? I hope so, for I really do not know what is fact.

'I am not informed as to Gladstone's final idea, though I am aware it goes far. It is possible that he may have encouraged Herbert to be indiscreet: it is probable that the latter was so off his own hook. It is, however, just as likely that it was smoke manufactured from a little fire by those skilled news experts on the *Standard*.

'As to the thing itself, the feeling may be a little impulsive and somewhat exaggerated, but it is at all events at present as strong as possible. Nowhere do the objections to it seem to be more warmly entertained than by most of our late colleagues, some on grounds of principle, others on those of opportunism.

'In the utter perplexity in which I find myself, it is some consolation as regards personal vanity that nobody seems to have a clear view of what is to be done.

'I suppose Gladstone has a clear notion, but I do not know that you, Spencer, Hartington, Harcourt, or Chamberlain, have any.

'A suggestion in a former letter of yours that we should wait till the Government and Parnell have shown their hands smiles to me most, but that does not relieve us from the duty of consideration and consultation.

'I wrote to ask Gladstone when he would be in town, but he has not yet answered. I shall repeat the question, but I have declined Hartington's suggestion (evidently against his own opinion), that I should comply with the wishes of Chamberlain and Harcourt, that an immediate meeting of the late Cabinet by Gladstone should be insisted upon.

'I can conceive no worse mode of coming to an agreement with Gladstone, or agreeing harmoniously to differ, than that the final consultation with him should be at a meeting of sixteen people.

'He may wish to give up the lead, but I hope that it will not appear that we are the cause of his going.

'He may wish to go on, in which case an agreement, though not very probable, may be arrived at.

'As pleasant a New Year as is consistent with the political prospect to you and yours! 'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

Sir William Harcourt urged an immediate meeting of the former Cabinet in order that Mr. Gladstone should be

brought to explain his intentions to the leading members of his party, and he pressed Lord Hartington to make himself the mouthpiece of the demand. Lord Hartington, however, declined. He considered that Mr. Gladstone had committed himself, and that a question of principle was involved on which agreement was no longer possible. 'I altogether differ from Mr. Gladstone in his opinion on the Home Rule question,' he wrote in forwarding the proposal of Sir William Harcourt, and he was now proceeding, as he informed Lord Granville, to consult with Mr. Goschen and others as to what practical steps might be taken to traverse Mr. Gladstone's plans. There could be no halfway house.

'Mr. Gladstone may say as much as he likes [he wrote] about our not committing ourselves; but he has committed himself up to his chin. He may not have formed a complete scheme, but he has allowed it to be known that in his opinion Home Rule—including an Irish Parliament—must be granted either by this or by some other Government. This has not been denied. Is it possible to conceive anything more absurd than that he should allow these opinions of his to be made known, constituting as they do a most important element in the discussion, and then ask us not to be in haste as to any decision? I do not see how it is possible that Mr. Gladstone and I should agree at any meeting which might be held.' [1]

Lord Granville had in 1873 told Mr. Gladstone that Lord Hartington 'rumbled and grumbled,' and misled by these recollections he thought that even now it might be wise to remember the enormous discount for which there was a margin in 'Hartington's growl,' [2] but the analogy of former compromises on questions which however important were small by comparison was no longer to the point. Strong men had to agree to differ, and each to go on his own way, though none went rejoicing.

Lord Granville followed Lord Hartington's example in declining to be the mouthpiece of a communication to Mr. Gladstone calling on him at once to summon the members of the ex-Cabinet to a meeting, though he recognised the

[1] Lord Hartington to Lord Granville, December 25, 29, 1885.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 21, 1885.

necessity of full and free communication before Parliament met in February, both on the burning question of the day and the procedure to be adopted on the Address.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

WALMER CASTLE, *December* 27, 1885.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—Harcourt's letter asking you to insist upon an ex-Cabinet before the end of the year was written on the 20th. There is no longer time for that date, and I have some doubts about the proposal as at present made.

'Harcourt gives more reasons against it than for it, and you evidently do not like it. Two members of the late Cabinet are out of the House of Commons.[1] The first consultation with Gladstone ought hardly to be in a meeting of sixteen people—with the probable result, as Harcourt justly says, of Gladstone resigning the leadership.

'I feel the importance of consultation as strongly as anyone. I have already asked Gladstone how soon before the meeting he means to be in town (he has not yet answered). Before meeting in a full ex-Cabinet, I should like to know what Gladstone's plan is, and what is your alternative. Harcourt tells us he has none.

'Gladstone may leave us, in which case I particularly wish that it should not appear that you are the cause of his doing so.

'If he does not wish to give up the leadership, agreement, though unlikely, is not impossible.

'It is despairing as regards the party and the public welfare, but it is some comfort to one's personal vanity to find everyone else as much at sea as oneself.

'I will not write to Gladstone to propose an ex-Cabinet, unless you telegraph to me that you think I ought to do so.

'But in any case I will repeat my question as to when he will be in town.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

The day after Lord Granville wrote the above letter, he received a memorandum which removed all doubts, if any still existed, as to what plans had been incubating in the inner recesses of Mr. Gladstone's mind, as it showed his intention to be, after giving an opportunity to the Government to deal with the Irish question, to accept office if

[1] Mr. Childers, who had been defeated at Pontefract, and Mr. Shaw-Lefevre, who had been defeated at Reading.

necessary himself, and to bring forward 'a plan of duly guarded Home Rule.'[1] Lord Granville recognised that three of the greatest measures of the century—Roman Catholic emancipation, the repeal of the Corn Laws, and the Reform Act of 1867—had been carried by Conservative Governments, and he cordially agreed in the proposal to give Lord Salisbury the opportunity of dealing with the Irish question. Nor was it, he thought, to be forgotten that the great constitutional changes made by the Revolution of 1688, by the Union with Scotland and that with Ireland, had been made without violence or disorder by the co-operation of the two great English parties, or of sections of them possessing a prerogative voice, when joined to those of their ordinary opponents. But failing such co-operation, Mr. Gladstone, governed by the master passion of his life—the desire to do justice to Roman Catholic Ireland—had now determined to make the venture himself, without possessing that majority independent of the Irish party which, in one of his Mid Lothian speeches, he had indicated as the preliminary condition.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, *December* 28, 1885.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Many thanks for your important letter and inclosure. I sent them by the early post to Spencer and to no one else. I was struck with what you say about not challenging Hartington.

'It is impulsive and not thought out, but at present the current of feeling is very strong, not only Chamberlain and Hartington, but Harcourt and other colleagues:—among outsiders people such as Northbourne and F. Leveson: Walter James (the son) saying he does not believe the working men in the North would stand concession.[2]

'My own opinion is that the safeguards for the minority must be efficient, and that the bribe necessary to satisfy Great Britain, whether logical or not, would be to get rid of the Irish members; the dry rot in the House of Commons.

'At our last meeting, you did not seem to be positively adverse.

'The plan of procedure when Parliament meets is most important,

[1] The memorandum is printed in the *Life of Gladstone*, vol. iii. p. 270.

[2] M.P. for Gateshead.

and I doubt any correspondence on the subject leading to a result. It must be by personal communication, so I hope you will be able to fix a day for coming to London. 'Yours, GRANVILLE.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD SPENCER.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *December* 28, 1885.

'MY DEAR SPENCER,—I send you this important paper. I propose answering it by saying that at so critical a moment, with so much divided or rather one-sided opinion, particularly among leaders, the greatest consideration ought to be given to every step; that I believe he has a complete plan, though I do not know it; that I believe you have not made up your mind as to safeguards; that the safeguard question is all-important; that the bribe to me and to public opinion I believe in Great Britain would be exclusion of Irish M.P.s, however illogical; and that it seems to be difficult to settle anything by correspondence until we have an opportunity of meeting and discussing.

'I shall write nothing till I hear from you by telegram or letter.

'Yours, G.'

Lord Granville's letter found Lord Spencer unshaken in his views. 'I consider,' he wrote in reply, 'our old methods for governing and treating Ireland quite useless, and if the guarantees as to the protection of the minority can be got, I should be for taking the plunge rather than adopting for a time stronger coercion than ever.'

'I say *for a time*, as we can get no continuity of such acts. I am not at all sure that the guarantees cannot be got. Mr. G. seems of that opinion. He is moreover dead against separation. I cannot help thinking that a great deal of the outcry arises from fear of separation. If that were shown to be impossible, more moderate views might prevail. . . .

'While the violence of some men reaches to declarations of fighting, I have evidence that other sensible men incline to Home Rule. (See an article in the November number of the *Fortnightly* by S. Laing, a sensible man though an old Adullamite.)

'All points to great caution. Mr. G. himself seems to think that no move could be made unless the condition of Ireland were in "a state of legality," "not substantially worse than when you left the country," and this cannot be known except by Government itself until Parliament meets. Why should not the Address be treated as an opportunity for an armed reconnaissance without bringing the

main bodies of the opposing forces into collision? The fact of passing over the Address without a vote of want of confidence would not prevent one being brought in immediately afterwards, if thought necessary by anyone.'[1]

Meanwhile, the discussion had to continue, for Mr. Gladstone was still full of the necessity of consultation with the leaders and subsequently with the party. But the great schism was not thereby stayed; and, amid all the portents of the coming disruption of the party, which with only two considerable intervals had governed Great Britain since the passing of Lord Grey's Reform Act, the year 1885 drew to its close. The sun was sinking amid the clouds of discord and doubt, yet it shot a few last rays to gild for a moment with a transient glory the departure in different directions of those who, politically speaking, were by this time conscious that they were probably soon about to take a lasting farewell, and that if they met again it would be as antagonists on the field where hitherto they had fought on the same side as friends.

Beginning with a movement by some independent members of the party to recognise 'the good temper, sound judgment, and signal ability' with which Lord Granville had for many years filled the position of leader of the House of Lords, one hundred and eight Liberal peers, representing every shade of opinion within the party, were found to join in the presentation to him of a testimonial, in the shape of two pictures. The first was of Lord Granville himself: the second of Lady Granville and her two daughters on the ramparts of Walmer Castle.[2]

LORD COWPER TO LORD GRANVILLE.

PANSHANGER, HERTFORD, *October* 12, 1885.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—A proposal was made at the end of the session by some of the independent members of the party in the House of Lords to present you with some sort of testimonial or memorial as a proof of their appreciation of the manner in which you have led us during the last twenty years.

[1] Lord Spencer to Lord Granville, December 29, 1885.

[2] The first of these pictures was by Mr. Daniel Wehrschmidt, the second by Mr. Carlo Perugini.

'This has been most cordially taken up, and there is now a list of about 100 contributors. I have been asked to sound you as to what form our present should take.

'It was arranged that the letters written by the different peers should be addressed to me, and I am sure it would gratify you to see what warm expressions of regard and esteem they many of them contain.

'The only thing in the shape of criticism that has been offered is an apprehension that it might possibly look as if we thought that the term of your leadership was drawing to a close. This I need not say was the very last thing in the world that entered into the heads of the promoters. Yours very truly,

'COWPER.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD COWPER.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *October* 14, 1885.

'MY DEAR COWPER,—I was never more surprised, or more agreeably so. But I ought not to have been astonished at any mark of kindness from those who have worked with me in the House of Lords. Their cordial support has alone enabled me for so long a time in any degree to represent in that assembly the Liberal party and its principles.

'As to the form of the present, I have no wish to express. In any shape it will remind me, and my children, of this flattering proof of friendly regard from those whose good opinion is so dear to me.

'I have to thank you for the caveat with which you so considerately finish your letter. But no testimonial is required to remind me of the age at which I have arrived. Yours sincerely,

'G.'

Christmas 1885 only brought the briefest of intermissions in the correspondence on the result of which the future of the Liberal party was to depend. 'I, like you,' Lord Granville wrote to Lord Spencer on the first day of the new year, 'am in despair. My only comfort is that I think *we* are on the same lines.' A few days after he had to acknowledge that it seemed now almost impossible to avoid a split.[1] 'The future is very dark,' he said, 'but not hopeless,' and he continued to peer into the box of the political Pandora.[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Lord Spencer, January 1, January 4, 1886.

[2] Lord Granville to Lady Granville, November 28, 1885.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD HARTINGTON.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *January* 1, 1886.

'MY DEAR HARTINGTON,—Being in the chair of two contentious meetings, and the children's festivity being celebrated to-day instead of Christmas Day, would not have prevented my going up if I had thought I could be of any use. I do not feel sure whether the communication to Gladstone which you may have decided upon touches upon the merits of the Irish question, upon the necessity of consultation, or upon our procedure on the Address. I have heard to-day from Gladstone, who knows nothing (at least from me) of your meeting.

'A portion of what he says may bear upon the communication, and even upon the necessity of making any. So that although I have no hint from him to give you any message, and although his letter is marked "secret," I thought it better immediately upon the receipt of his letter by second post to ask you by telegraph to wait for a letter you would get from me to-morrow. He deprecates the idea that his mind is either made up, or tends towards making some decisive motion on the Address. He thinks it likely that there may be no palpable split upon the Address between the T.'s and the M.'s.

'In which case he would readily fall in with what seems to be the prevailing disposition among leading men, and let the Address pass so far as he is concerned without any motion, only waiting the prompt production of the Irish plan of the Government and reserving a right to obtain from them satisfactory declarations on that head.

'He has done nothing, and will do nothing of himself, except what he firmly believes that those "of whom he speaks not only ought to, but in principle would assent to and even desire." Should he meditate anything not in their sense, he will take care that they are not taken by surprise. But he hopes that I shall not think it unreasonable that beyond this, and inclusively as to time (but not in any case beyond the 12th), he should retain his liberty.

'He discusses with whom on coming to London he should hold the *first* limited but connected consultation (of course you are one).

'I shall tell him that I have confidentially informed you of what he has told me about consultation and mode of proceeding.

'Yours,

'GRANVILLE.'

LORD HARTINGTON TO LORD GRANVILLE.

DEVONSHIRE HOUSE, PICCADILLY, W., *January* 2, 1886.

'MY DEAR GRANVILLE,—The communication decided upon was a rather urgent appeal that he would give the earliest opportunity of

consultation in the first instance with the leaders, and subsequently with the party itself, especially if any motion of want of confidence was likely to arise. It was suggested that the 12th would be very late for any such consultation. I added on my own part only a reservation as to the improbability of my being able to assent to any policy in the Home Rule direction.

'Considering the nature of the communication and that its essence was to clear ourselves from responsibility for delay, I did not think there could be any reason for waiting, and sent it as soon as I could write my letter—by late post last night. I am rather glad that I did so, because if it had been sent *after* the receipt of your letter, it would have looked more like a remonstrance against his decision.

'It is useless to expect him to be intelligible; but to whom do you understand him to refer as "those of whom he speaks" who not only ought to, but in principle would assent to and even desire what he will do of himself?

'I don't suppose our communication will produce any acceleration of his movements, but we have to some extent liberated our minds. I do not think there was any general agreement among us on the merits, but we were very amicable. . . .

'Of course Mr. G.'s announcements are an important factor in the case, and their effect can never be done away with.

'Did any leader ever treat a party in such a way as he has done?

'Yours,

'HARTINGTON.'

'Times are indeed critical,' wrote Lord Kimberley, 'and a false step might bring grave calamities on this nation.'[1] A little more than a hundred years before these events the Liberal party of the time had been sundered and destroyed by one huge false step on the part of Mr. Fox. Was there to be a repetition of the events of 1783? Was there to be another great schism and perhaps another coalition? The auguries were ominous. 'The question at issue is not of detail,' Lord Derby wrote. With the same common sense which distinguished Lord Hartington, he was able to see that no verbal ingenuity could render identical things essentially different.

'It is simply an Irish Parliament or not [he tersely summed up]. I am quite ready to drop out of the whole concern and efface myself; but the more I think of what an Irish Parliament would be, the

[1] Lord Kimberley to Lord Granville, January 5, 1886.

more impossible it becomes to me to accept the proposal in any form. What is more important, I don't think even Gladstone can carry the Liberal party with him in support of it. But suppose he carried it in the Commons, it must be thrown out in the Lords; and then comes another dissolution, and such an election cry as no Conservative Minister ever had before. We should go where Fox and North went in 1784. At least, such is my belief. Downing Street is not specially attractive to me, personally; ten years of that sweet spot are enough; but it is a pity (perhaps it could not be helped) that we should go down in a storm of our own raising.'[1]

That the Administration of Lord Salisbury would not long survive the meeting of the new Parliament had been generally foreseen; 333 Liberals, 251 Conservatives, and 86 supporters of Mr. Parnell had been returned at the general election. The failure of the negotiations which had been carried on between Lord Carnarvon and Mr. Parnell in the winter of 1885 on the subject of Irish Government had been followed by the resignation of Lord Carnarvon, and had rendered out of the question even a temporary alliance such as had probably been aimed at. The popular belief that Mr. Gladstone had taken up the running where Lord Carnarvon had left it, and was ready to bring in a measure establishing Home Rule in Ireland, made it also certain that although the Irish vote at the recent election had by Mr. Parnell's orders been given against the Liberal candidates, the Irish members would nevertheless seize the first opportunity which might offer itself of defeating the Government in the House of Commons. Such an opportunity was quickly created in the debate on the Address, when Mr. Jesse Collings moved an amendment expressing regret at the entire omission from the Royal Speech of any proposal for benefiting the agricultural labourer. The motion was the parliamentary expression of the policy popularly known as that of 'Three acres and a cow,' with which Mr. Chamberlain had associated himself. The apprehension of what might follow the adoption of the amendment, if carried against the Government, not indeed in regard to the cow and the acres, but in regard to the future of Ireland, caused a certain number of Liberals—Lord Hartington being among

[1] Lord Derby to Lord Granville, January 6, 1886.

them—to vote against the amendment. A still larger number, including Mr. Bright, abstained from the division altogether. Nevertheless the joint Liberal and Irish vote prevailed, and the amendment was carried. On January 27, 1886, Lord Salisbury's Government came to an end, and Mr. Gladstone was again master of the situation.

The composition of any future Liberal Government and the distribution of places had been already busily canvassed. Lord Granville had not failed to note that, owing to the circumstances set out in the previous chapters, an unfavourable verdict, at least for the moment, had been formed by the public on some of the actions of the late Ministry, and that expression was now being given to this feeling in the press, especially in regard to the death of General Gordon, the Majuba disaster, and the Penjdeh incident, in regard to all of which it was sought to fasten a special responsibility on him.

'I have been rather indignant [the Duke of Argyll wrote] at the way in which you have been treated by the Liberal press, as if you personally had been the cause or specially responsible for any faults in foreign policy. Perhaps you will say that there were none such. This I don't allow; but I must say that the errors I complain of most were certainly *not departmental.* They were clearly the result of a purely Cabinet policy, and moreover, I am convinced, due mainly to the head of the Government, for they bear the marks of his peculiarities. You have been made a scapegoat for the faults of others. Such at all events is my very strong impression.

'The only faults which seemed to me to be possibly *departmental* only were those connected with the new colonial policy of the Germans, in which it seemed as if you had not taken alarm in time, or replied in time to certain despatches. Probably you have a good explanation; but whether you have or not, it is not on this that the public feeling has been adverse, but on the policy in Egypt &c., and I am not surprised at all that anyone should have been unsuspecting of the strange Colonial mania which took possession of Bismarck so unexpectedly.

'The mere policy of *cut and shuffle* in constructing the Government ought not to have been allowed to imply a degree of blame to you which is quite unfair.'[1]

[1] Duke of Argyll to Lord Granville, February 11, 1886.

Mr. Gladstone at once accepted the duty of forming a Government, and asked Lord Granville to come into consultation, but without any allusion to the Foreign Office; and Lord Granville, noticing that almost simultaneously a fresh outburst, bearing all the marks of careful organisation, had begun against him, became convinced that an intention which he had harboured for some time was correct, and that the hour for retirement from office had arrived.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *January* 31, 1886.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—On more than one occasion during your last Administration I placed my office at your disposal, in order to facilitate other arrangements. I felt much the encouragement of your answers, and still more the undeserved praise which I heard you had bestowed on me behind my back. When I told you the other day to use your discretion where to place me in the manner most advantageous to your Government, I was in hopes of relieving you from some difficulties. I was much touched by your reply as to my past career at the Foreign Office. But the language of the press has placed me in a different position. The difficulty of leading the House of Lords for a Liberal is greater than it ever was. Lord Salisbury will speak with greater authority than he has hitherto done. Lords Iddesleigh, Halsbury, and Ashbourne, add to his debating forces.

'Anything that weakens the authority of the leader would be injurious. This would be the case if I accepted the position of being a failure, and placed by public opinion in an office of no work as my fitting place. The fact that you and Hartington judiciously admitted that there had been faults in the conduct of foreign affairs, would unavoidably add to the impression that I was especially to blame, and had been accordingly displaced. My saying this looks as if I insisted upon the Foreign Office. But the contrary is the case. Even if you thought yourself justified in insisting upon my taking it, I strongly advise you not to do so. Your first object should be to make your Government as acceptable as possible, which does not appear to be compatible with my taking the Foreign Office.

'Pray remember, with regard to my holding any office, there are more first-rate peers available than offices for them to occupy. I am certain that I could be of great use to you in following (with greater activity) the lines of Lords Lansdowne and Cranworth when out of office—in public and private support of your Government.

I believe I might be especially useful in keeping together a party of warm independent supporters.

'I have taken three days carefully to consider the decision to which I have come. I hope you will not ask me to discuss it with you. The later it is known, except to you and me, the better.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.

'I should take the earliest opportunity of making my entire agreement with you known.'

Mr. Gladstone in reply to this communication pressed Lord Granville to keep the leadership in the House of Lords, and to combine it, as had been done in other cases, with one of the offices charged with less heavy departmental duties than the Secretaryship of State. Lord Lansdowne had led the House of Lords for many years as President of the Council, and this in comparatively recent years.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *January* 31, 1886.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—There is nothing new in the kindness of your letter.

'I believe you underrate the use I might be to you out of the Cabinet. I am sure you overrate that of which I could be in the Cabinet. I have told you what I think—of taking at this moment an office without work.

'With regard to others I am quite aware of my deficiencies increased by age. But I have been out of touch with any of them for years, and I know of none for which I have more aptitude than the Foreign Office.

'You do not mention that which you would suggest and would wish me to take.

'My letter was written after much consideration and after consultation with my brother. I cannot, under the pressure of your wish, refuse to talk it over with him to-morrow.

'It worries me to think I am adding to your difficulties instead of diminishing them.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

It was ultimately arranged that Lord Granville should again become Colonial Secretary, Lord Rosebery accepting the seals of the Foreign Office.

LORD ROSEBERY TO LORD GRANVILLE.

LANSDOWNE HOUSE, BERKELEY SQUARE, S.W.
*February* 3, 1886.

'MY DEAR LORD GRANVILLE,—I must intrude upon you with one line.

'You will know otherwise that I have been nominated to the Foreign Office, but you can only know from myself with what real misgiving and reluctance I go there.

'No one is so convinced as I am of my unfitness for that post, and no one is better aware that all the knowledge and experience of foreign administration on our side is concentrated in yourself. Your advice and assistance are therefore as indispensable to the Government in foreign affairs as your leadership of the House of Lords is to the smoothing of its path in Parliament. Indeed, had not Mr. Gladstone promised me your generous co-operation, it would have been hardly possible for me even to make the attempt. I hope I am not presumptuous, therefore, in venturing to reckon on your kindness, and your guidance in the overwhelming task which I have undertaken.

'Believe me,

'Yours sincerely, R.'

The Colonial Office had been held by Lord Granville in the Administration of 1868 when it was first formed, and Mr. Gladstone considered that it ought to have been offered to him by Lord John Russell in 1855.[1] Subsequently Lord Granville doubted whether in again accepting it in 1886 he had adopted a wise course, as he arrived at the conclusion that Mr. Chamberlain might have occupied it, and that in that event some of Mr. Gladstone's subsequent difficulties might have been diminished or modified.

The history of Mr. Gladstone's third Administration is the history of the first Home Rule Bill in the House of Commons. But Lord Granville found an opportunity of coming forward in defence of the views of his colleagues on the public platform. Speaking at the National Liberal Club on April 14, 1886, he defended his own action and that of his colleagues who had accepted office in an Administration pledged to introduce a Home Rule Bill.

[1] See vol. i. ch. iv. p. 86.

'Mr. Chamberlain [he said] the other night alluded to the apparent inconsistency of some of us, who had objected last year to his plan of a General Council at Dublin, and now supported a wider measure. When that scheme was proposed I and some of my then colleagues said that of the two we should prefer a larger measure. My objections to that proposal were these, that such a council would be dissatisfied and would strive to become and after much friction would succeed in becoming a Parliament; while, on the other hand, you would have in the House of Commons a large number of Home Rulers representing dissatisfied constituencies, believing themselves justified in obstructing legislation, and disposing of the fate of successive Governments, and able to do so. My wish at the time was to give large powers of self-government, according to a plan of Lord John Russell's, to the four Irish Provinces. I discussed this point with one from whom I differ on this question, but on whose sense and judgment I have the greatest reliance. He left me without a reply when he said, "I dislike your plan, but that is not a proof that it is not good. But what is the use of a good plan if you can get no support for it? And where will you get support for this?"

'And from that time the more I have thought of the matter the more convinced I have become that, in order to do anything which is permanently successful, the plan must be sufficiently comprehensive to recommend itself to the great majority of the Irish people. I need not say how much I was encouraged by the opinions of Mr. Gladstone. I own I am not sensitive to the taunt that the Liberal party are too subservient to their leader. I do not feel at all disposed to speak apologetically with regard to the present measure. It was said in 1852 that France had a master because the French would not have leaders, and it appears to be not unwise for a party to be influenced by a leader in whom they have full confidence, who is not only an orator, but a statesman, who can not only recommend a measure, but has a constructive power to a degree to which no other man in either House of Parliament can pretend in the slightest degree. I may add that if I was so influenced by Mr. Gladstone, I was still even more encouraged by the views of Lord Spencer. If ever there was a genuine Liberal, Lord Spencer is that man. Lord Spencer knows Ireland well, and he administered the existing system firmly and conscientiously. Violent attacks were made upon him by Conservatives and Home Rulers, which are now appreciated at their just value. Well, what was the conclusion at which Lord Spencer arrived? He was convinced, especially after the break in the continuity of policy owing to the action of the late Government, that there was no choice between repression, in the efficiency and

permanency of which they did not believe, or some such large concession as is now proposed, accompanied by the safeguards with which it is surrounded. I hope I shall not be misunderstood. I do not support this plan merely as a sad necessity, as what the French call a *pis aller*. I believe it is good in itself. We have been governing Ireland for hundreds of years, with the result we all know. An Irish landlord—an excellent type of his class—in discussing with a lady, very far from being a violent Home Ruler, the state of Ireland, ended by saying that neither of the great parties knew Ireland or how to govern it. The retort of the lady was to ask whether that did not suggest that in that case it might be wise to try whether they could not govern themselves.[1] This answer appears to me to contain in a nutshell the pith of the matter.'[2]

Lord Granville, like many others, believed that the principal inducement to the English and Scotch members of Parliament to pass the Home Rule Bill would be found in the provisions depriving Ireland of the right to send members to the Parliament at Westminster. But his judgment proved to be incorrect, for this proposal not only gave a formidable weapon to those who charged Mr. Gladstone with compassing the repeal of the Union, but also aroused the resentment of some of those who were ready to concede a Legislature to Ireland, but subject on Imperial questions to the control of the Parliament at Westminster, and bearing the same relation to it as the Legislature of one of the States of a Federal Union, such as the Dominion of Canada, bears to the Federal Parliament. Time and opportunity, however, have as much to do as the merits of the case with the success of legislative proposals in Parliament; and this at least is certain, that in 1886 public opinion had not been matured by discussion, and was therefore unlikely—public opinion in England being essentially conservative—to abandon what had been hitherto the generally received belief of both the great political parties since 1800 in regard to the necessity of the maintenance of the representation of Ireland at Westminster in some shape

[1] The Irish landlord here referred to is the Marquess of Ormonde, and the lady is Lady Granville. The conversation took place at a dinner at Grosvenor House.

[2] *Times*, April 15, 1886.

or form. On the other hand, the long subsequent discussion of the question has not shown that any plan of Home Rule exists better or more practicable than that proposed in 1886. Even so determined an adversary as the Duke of Argyll frequently admitted to Lord Granville that, given the necessity of conceding a Legislature to Ireland, the most practical arrangement was to treat Ireland like a colony and to exclude the Irish members from the Imperial Parliament. Lord Derby had expressed the same view. This was substantially the scheme of 1886, and Lord Granville never altered his opinion in its favour.

It is not difficult to see, especially at this interval of time, that, quite apart from the merits of the question, the attempt to deal with Home Rule in 1886 was premature. A nation will make a great alteration of its constitution in one or other of two sets of circumstances. It will do so either after long and careful inquiry, such as preceded the Act of Union with Scotland, when time has been given for the opinion of the country to become convinced of the wisdom of the proposed change; or it may be forced by adverse circumstances such as those which compelled the British Parliament in 1782 to grant complete legislative and judicial independence to Ireland, in the same year as that in which it had to submit to the final loss of the American colonies and to unfavourable treaties with France, Spain, and Holland. Neither of these two sets of circumstances existed in 1886. The nation had not been prepared by previous discussion; and in the external relations of the country there was nothing to compel an unwilling consent to change. The violent conduct of the Irish members in Parliament and the excesses of the land war had alienated public opinion; and the fact that the Liberal party at the election of 1885 had been in opposition to Mr. Parnell did not fail to exercise an adverse influence on the reception of Mr. Gladstone's proposals in 1886. It is therefore not astonishing that the days of Mr. Gladstone's third Administration were few and evil. On June 7, 1886, the Home Rule Bill was rejected on the second reading by a majority of thirty votes. The

numbers were 343 to 313. Parliament was then immediately dissolved, and as the result of the election Lord Salisbury before the summer was well advanced again found himself Prime Minister of Great Britain and Ireland.

A peer is not allowed to take part in elections; but it was the gout and not the privileges of the House of Commons which compelled Lord Granville to write the following letters from a couch in Carlton House Terrace while his heart was in the fray.

LORD GRANVILLE TO LORD SPENCER.

*July* 4, 1886.

MY DEAR SPENCER,—We are going to the dogs. Wolverton reckoned that ten victories (Schnadhorst twelve) were wanted on Friday, to insure us a majority.

'We were barely even, and yesterday but a balance of eight.

'G. talks of a Cabinet about a week hence.

'I am better, have got upon my gouty chair, and am living in the ball room, which is cool. 'Yours, G.'

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *July* 6, 1886.

'Worse and worse till the news from Edinburgh this morning. "Merry-pebbles" is rather excited; has written a long letter to the Queen, the drift of which I cannot understand.

'R. Churchill could not sleep for nights before he went away.

'Bright's speech is supposed to have played the deuce.

'I will telegraph you what Gladstone [says] about Cabinets, as soon as he comes to town.

'Aix must be hot. You are said to be going to Carlsbad.

'Trust you are both enjoying yourselves. 'Yours, G.'

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *July* 7, 1886.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—Now that the turn has taken place, I am sanguine of being soon able to get about.

'But the elections have not been a tonic.

'Lady G. permitted herself a little dance, in which, however, under present circumstances, I did not join.

'I have, as you suppose, thought a good deal about the time of resignation. I incline to its being immediate, but agree that it ought to be very carefully considered.

'I can conceive some good reasons for meeting Parliament.

'I am not sure that it is not fairer to the Queen.

'I think she ought, and hope she will send for Salisbury.

'It is true that Hartington made the motion, but he is at the head of the smallest section of the four in the House of Commons, and one that will probably be dismembered by the constituencies.

'If Salisbury forms a Tory Government, some of Hartington's men will slide to us; if Hartington attempts it, I am not sure that he will not get some of ours.

'I do not think the odds are very great against a Coalition Government.

'The future, in a national point of view, seems to me to be fearfully dark.

'Yours sincerely,

'GRANVILLE.'

It was asked at the time, and the question has often been repeated since, why Lord Granville never tried to exercise his undoubted influence with Mr. Gladstone in order to induce him to postpone the question of Home Rule in 1886 to a more favourable opportunity. The arguments in favour of such a course strongly resembled those which he had pressed on Mr. Gladstone in 1882 in favour of postponing the question of Reform. In both cases the House of Commons had only recently been elected. In neither case had the Liberal majority been returned on the issue which the Prime Minister wished to bring before the House. In both cases success implied the early termination of the existence of the new Parliament, and for that very reason success was improbable. Lord Granville in a plea for postponement would probably have carried with him a weight of opinion which might have induced, if not compelled, Mr. Gladstone—himself always more ready to listen to Lord Granville than to most of his colleagues—to yield his own opinion. The answer may probably be found in the following circumstances. On the general merits of the question and also in regard to the particular measure introduced, Lord Granville was in more complete agreement with Mr. Gladstone than were most of the Cabinet; and in regard to the opportunity, there was something in this political Balaclava charge which appealed to the element of optimism in his character, and made him, as in the expedition to

relieve General Gordon, too prone to believe that matters would turn out eventually as he hoped that they would. A certain sporting instinct and enjoyment of the unexpected, which, however carefully repressed, was strong within him, made him enjoy the bold hazard of this dash into the fogs and bogs of Home Rule, and caused him to enter on it with all the greater zest in proportion to the risk. He might have warned the Prime Minister, as he had in 1882, and also in 1865, against the danger of a *coup d'état* without adequate calculation of the chances of success, but impelled by his ever-growing feeling of devotion to Mr. Gladstone he determined to stand by him at this critical time and to refuse to desert his leader on a question of tactics, when on the main issue he was in agreement with him. The very dissimilarity of their respective characters and gifts seemed only to constitute an additional link between them, and each might with perfect truth have said of the other:

> 'He was rich where I was poor,
> And he supplied my wants the more
> As his unlikeness fitted mine.'

Lord Salisbury might reign in the place of Mr. Gladstone, and the Liberal party might be scattered to the four winds of heaven, but Lord Granville's faith in Mr. Gladstone was undiminished. 'I have never,' he wrote to him, 'been more proud of being associated with you, or more sure of our being right, than now;'[1] and, like Peirithous in the Athenian legend, he plunged after his king into the gulf.

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, July 29, 1886.

## CHAPTER XIV

### LAST YEARS

### 1886–1891

In the years immediately succeeding the fall of Mr. Gladstone's third Administration, sedulous efforts were made to find a way out of the difficulty occasioned by the question of the representation of Ireland at Westminster as part of a Home Rule scheme. Mainly through the influence of Lord Granville, Mr. Gladstone was persuaded to have an interview with Mr. Chamberlain; but it led to no satisfactory result. It was next thought that a conference between the leaders of the Liberals who originally joined the Government of 1886 and subsequently left it, and the leaders of the main body of the Opposition in the House of Commons, might prove efficacious. The so-called 'Round Table Conference' ensued in 1887, when Mr. Chamberlain and Sir George Trevelyan met Sir William Harcourt and Mr. John Morley with a view to a pacification.

Almost at the same time a crisis had occurred which seemed to threaten the life of the Government. Lord Randolph Churchill, who was leader of the House of Commons and Chancellor of the Exchequer, suddenly resigned; and for the moment it looked as if Lord Salisbury might find it difficult to fill the vacant office.[1]

'If [Lord Granville wrote to Sir William Harcourt] a *modus vivendi* can be found (a great *if*) including your third condition (a legislative Parliament), the sanction of Gladstone, the agreement of Chamberlain, and the acquiescence of the Irish, I can conceive nothing more satisfactory, though even in that case it would be almost hopeless to expect Hartington's support. It is a great fact

[1] Mr. Goschen became Chancellor of the Exchequer.

that you and Morley believe in the *bona fides* of Chamberlain. If it were not for this I should be afraid the latter was only trying to put himself right with the large body of Liberals, without any prospect of coming to an arrangement.

'I do not infer from Gladstone's delay in answering you, either assent or dissent. He probably wishes to know how the Government *is reformed*, before coming to a final decision on the next move.

'The four you propose on our side are men of great ability. If it were not for the assurance you have given to Gladstone that nothing shall be done excepting under his auspices and superintendence, there would be a danger lest, in the wish to come to an agreement, you all showed favour to a financial scheme, to which he would have well-grounded objections, and in the case of the breakdown of the negotiations would appear to be the sole obstacle. If Randolph acted from the dictates of conscience, there is nothing to be said. If otherwise, he committed an immense blunder, and will have learnt that resignations are sacred things, to be handled with great respect.

'I agree with you about Hartington. My personal feelings make me rejoice that he has not accepted, though I think it would have been the best thing for our policy.' [1]

Whatever hopes might have been entertained of any good results following these efforts at reunion were short-lived. There was no pacification; not even 'a truce of God,' and only fresh recriminations were the result. The quarrel deepened and widened between the Liberals and those who now came to be termed Liberal Unionists, till it became permanent. Nor did the Government of Lord Salisbury go to pieces in consequence of Lord Randolph Churchill's resignation. Nevertheless, a constant exchange of views continued between the Liberal leaders, chiefly owing to the persistent efforts of Lord Granville. It was suggested that the Irish members might either be allowed to be present at Westminster to vote on questions of Imperial policy only; or that they might sit at Westminster with a right to vote upon every question whether British or Irish. To the second of the above-mentioned plans it began to be rumoured that Mr. Gladstone himself was favourable. The plan was, however,

[1] Lord Granville to Sir William Harcourt, January 2, 1887.

open to obvious criticisms, and by many was considered to be the worst of all the solutions which had been proposed, whether regarded on the merits, or from a tactical point of view.

'I do not see my way [Lord Herschell wrote to Lord Granville] to the conclusion that the Irish should continue to retain their present position in Parliament, and having the *exclusive* management of their own domestic legislature, should have a large share in the management of ours also. I think it would be indefensible in theory and very mischievous in practice; and further (though I may be wrong in this as in my other views) that it would be very difficult to reconcile the British public to it, and that an appeal on such a point to the country might have a disastrous result. The strength of our position has been an appeal to justice and fair play. *Let the Irish manage their own domestic affairs.* The appeal would then come with equal force, *If this is to be so, let the English enjoy the same privilege.* I am quite alive to the difficulty of such an arrangement as would be involved in the restriction of their presence to certain questions. It is tremendous. Nevertheless I think it will have to be faced. I think there are likely to be not a few who, like myself, though quite prepared to give Home Rule to Ireland, are not prepared to do this on the terms of their still controlling English domestic legislation. And what would the Scotch say? The Irish would have more control over Scotch legislation than themselves. Have you thought of the power of such a cry? It would enormously quicken the cry for Scotch Home Rule. Suppose this granted. Are the Scotch and Irish to manage their own affairs and to take a share in managing ours too? The proposal would, I think, strike British common sense as grotesque, and would appeal to no sentiment. . . . The Irish vote could never be counted on, and on all questions with our Liberal touchstones, such as unsectarian education and protection, they would vote against us to a certainty. I am not a blind adherent of these views, and am quite ready to be convinced, but they are the result of not a little meditation.'[1]

Lord Granville, while admitting the difficulties, adhered to his old view that the proposal of the Bill of 1886 was the best.

'I am still [he wrote to Mr. Gladstone] against the retention of the Irish, and see great objections to all the possible ways of

[1] Lord Herschell to Lord Granville, October 29, 1887.

retaining them. But I have no sort of objection to discuss the subject, nor to the further question (if agreement was come to) whether you should make any announcement at this time on the matter.'[1]

If things looked black in England, they were no better in Ireland. Lord Granville's intimate friend, the Earl of Bessborough, had been succeeded by his brother Frederick, famous in his day at Lord's and at Harrow as one of the Paladins of English cricket, but also known as one of the great men in the world of English Railway Direction, as the former agent of the Fitzwilliam estates in Ireland, and as the Chairman of the Irish Land Commission the report of which had preceded the Land Act of 1881. A near neighbour in Ireland of the Irish leader, he used to declare, though a former land agent himself, that the land question had been largely the creation of the land agents, and he obstinately stood up for Mr. Parnell against all comers, influenced a little, it used by some to be suspected, by the fact that Mr. Parnell was, like himself, a good cricketer. His own estates he personally managed with a skill second only to that of his deceased brother, whose intimate friendship with Lord Granville he shared, though he had hesitated to embark on board the Home Rule ship.

'I do think [he now wrote to Lord Granville] that matters should never be allowed to reach the dangerous state in which they now are, without some determined effort at a joint settlement being made by English *parties*—no doubt individuals must be the negotiators, and the negotiators ought to be the leaders.

'I have for many years been asked by many how are things going on in Ireland, and I have always felt obliged to reply, "Things always become a little worse every year," and so it will continue to be, so long as the young men grow up better educated and with less and less chance of earning a living in their own country from want of employment, and this want arising from the general poverty of the country, which over a series of years is only occasionally lightened by a year or two of exceptional prosperity for the farmers. Fine active young fellows grow up with the feeling that they are driven out of their country, and they become rebels at heart.'[2]

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, May 27, 1887.

[2] Lord Bessborough to Lord Granville, February 19, 1888.

Subsequent generations will have much difficulty in realising the extreme bitterness which at this time not only made itself felt in political life, but also invaded English society. It broke up parties, it invaded clubs, it embittered social relations. Country houses no longer knew their accustomed guests ; old friends treated one another with frigid politeness. A great lady—one of the few who still adhered to the Liberal party—related how, having invited another great lady to join a dinner party, to which Lord Granville had been invited, her friend made it a condition that if she accepted she was at least not to be asked to sit next to, much less be taken in to dinner by him, as she declined to be in any way associated with 'a traitor to his country.' The story is told how a gentleman, living in a suburban villa in Surrey, explained to a near relation of Lord Granville in the train between Redhill and Gomshall with great *aplomb* and evident sincerity that Mr. So-and-So, who had recently come into the neighbourhood, was certainly not—as had been most falsely and wickedly reported—a Home Ruler, 'because, you know, *he is a gentleman*,' a verdict which was promptly endorsed by the other suburban residents travelling in the same carriage. Even the sacred precincts of Brooks's were stirred by the demon of discord. A member of Mr. Gladstone's late Cabinet, who, it was declared, had many years before been himself 'pilled' when a candidate, was declared to have spoken contemptuously of the Liberal Unionists as he descended the stairs of the Club, where he had been dining as a guest. The irate Liberal Unionists immediately discovered an easy way of revenge. The son of the ex-Minister came up, it so happened, for election almost immediately after this ill-timed outburst of postprandial eloquence, and was swiftly made to experience the same fate which had befallen his parent many years before. Thereupon the supporters of Mr. Gladstone at the next opportunity revenged themselves by treating the eldest son of a Whig Unionist peer in a similar manner. Then gradually at each successive election the circle of carnage widened and widened until it began to be whispered that it would soon be impossible for anybody to get into Brooks's at all, and that the

time might be more or less accurately calculated when the last member of the Club would in solitary glory be seen contemplating the declining sun of London society from the large window which looks down St. James's Street. One member declared that the shade of Mr. Fox had been observed flitting in the passages; and though another member surmised that it was only the solid figure of an ancient servitor of the Club with a bottle of port in his hand, which had been mistaken for the shade of the statesman, both agreed in acknowledging that the gravity of the situation was worthy of the appearance of one of the departed Whig saints. Who, it was asked, could save the situation? One man only, Lord Granville, was the response. Would he do it, and if so how could it be done? Another election was coming round, fraught with a certain renewal of hostilities, and after that the deluge. The fatal day soon arrived. The room was crowded. Lord Granville was observed moving uneasily about. 'Do you think they will stand it?' he asked of a friend. 'They may stand it from you, but from nobody else,' was the reply. Then just as the clock struck three, and the ballot, according to what was then the practice, was about to begin, Lord Granville stepped forward, and, addressing the members, made a preliminary apology for turning the gathering into something like a discussion forum. In a few well-chosen words he then alluded to the antiquity of the Club, and the previous divisions in the party which it had survived, and expressed a hope—using almost the words which Burke had employed in a slightly different connection—which he believed all present in their hearts really shared, that there should at least be one place left in London where 'a truce might be allowed to the divisions and animosities of mankind,' and friends might still be allowed to meet one another on the same terms as of old.[1] A murmur of suppressed applause ran round the room. All felt that a true note had been struck, and that the better feelings of human nature had been vindicated. The immediate result of the ballot proved the victory which had been gained. All the

[1] Prior, *Life of Burke*, p. 388.

candidates, to whichever section of the party they belonged, were elected, and the members broke up exercising an easy virtue by denouncing the ex-Minister as the cause of all the trouble. 'I never felt so nervous in my life,' Lord Granville said as he walked home.

Notwithstanding Lord Herschell's objections, when a conclave of some of the Liberal leaders took place at Hawarden in 1889, the ex-Ministers present decided to seek a way out of the difficulty by maintaining the Irish representation at Westminster, but in diminished numbers, and with the right to vote on every question whether British or Irish. This arrangement appeared to Sir William Harcourt, who had been unable to attend, as well as to Lord Herschell, to combine all the objections which had been made to the former proposals without any of their merits; and he embodied his views in some vigorous letters to Lord Granville and Mr. Gladstone, describing the proposal as 'a fatal and irretrievable error.'[1]

The obvious moral of these communications and others of the same tenor was, in Lord Granville's opinion, the wisdom of the course inculcated by Mr. Gladstone 'of preaching reticence.' 'Nothing,' he said, 'but the pressure of a practical necessity to decide, will produce the perfect agreement which is to be wished for.'[2] Thus any solution seemed farther off than ever. The Liberal party in the House of Lords had meanwhile become a mere shadow of its former self, as the breach between the supporters and opponents of Home Rule within its ranks had become final. It could barely have mustered thirty votes on a division. A battle, Lord Wellington is supposed to have said in Spain, is the last resource of a great general. Lord Granville in any case had to act on the maxim and carefully avoid divisions which could only reveal the nakedness of the land. Lord Kimberley observed at this time that he could not sufficiently acknowledge the courtesy of Lord Salisbury in alluding to Lord Granville and himself 'as the leaders of the opposite party,' for although he

[1] Sir William Harcourt to Lord Granville, October 27, 1889.
[2] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, October 31, 1889.

could see Lord Granville and Lord Granville could see him, it was exceedingly difficult for them to recognise where their party was. The Liberal party in the House of Lords now bore in fact a resemblance to the Spanish fleet in Sheridan's play, which could not be seen because it was not yet in sight, though Lord Granville still persistently believed in its appearance on some future day not yet named on the Order Book of the House. The Duke of Argyll—once the chosen henchman of Mr. Gladstone—none the less thundered and lightened at the almost empty benches, and became so conspicuous by the frequency and ferocity of his attacks on his former colleagues, that at last Lord Granville, notwithstanding their ancient friendship, retorted one afternoon with considerable asperity. A friendly explanation ensued.

LORD GRANVILLE TO THE DUKE OF ARGYLL.

18 CARLTON HOUSE TERRACE, S.W., *June* 23, 1887.

'MY DEAR ARGYLL,—Many thanks for your note. My intimacy with you alone justified my allowing what I said the other evening having been drawn from me.

'My attachment to you, greater than that I feel for almost any other public man now living, is based on the charm of your perfectly uncommonplace character, and on my admiration for your extraordinary abilities.

'But human nature is human nature, and it is some relief to find a flaw somewhere.

'The phrases you use in a note, intended to prove that you are never unnecessarily violent, seem to show that so great a master of language does not always understand the value of words.

'It is not for me to teach you how you can best combat Gladstone's Irish policy; but has it never struck you that his hold on public opinion in Scotland and elsewhere is almost in exact proportion to the violence of the abuse poured upon him; and would not your arguments be just as strong if they had not the appearance of being caused by a personal animosity against Gladstone, which I am convinced you do not feel? 'Yours, G.'

'No one can successfully act the part of a cherubim. One must sit either upon the great Liberal or the great Conservative party.'[1] Probably Lord Granville would have considered

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, June 10, 1881.

these words, in which he had once expressed to Mr. Gladstone a certain dislike which he entertained for 'cross-bench' politicians, to be his best answer to the Duke of Argyll. The conduct of Mr. Goschen, who at the time of this great crisis accepted the necessities of the situation and crossed the floor of the House, seemed to him to be more practical and therefore more useful to the nation than the position of those who remained on the Liberal benches, and thence enacted the part of the friends of Job. For himself, Lord Granville, having been the ally of Mr. Gladstone in the time of prosperity, determined to stand by him in the evil days on which they were fallen.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

WALMER CASTLE, DEAL, *December* 27, 1889.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I write a note, which I cannot hope or wish that you should read, satiated as you will be on Sunday by the innumerable letters full of admiration, sympathy, and good wishes which you will receive.

'When we arrive at our age, it is almost incongruous to congratulate upon birthdays; but I do so as sincerely in your case as I could on those of any of my youngest friends.

'Your extraordinary strength and vitality is not only a blessing for your friends and family, but for the whole world.

'Yours,

'GRANVILLE.'

It has been truly said that at this time there were only two men who really existed so far as the British public was concerned—the English leader and the Irish leader.[1] But in 1890 the parliamentary situation was complicated by the events which led to the political disappearance of one of them, shortly to be followed by his death. The Liberal leader now had the difficult question to decide, whether the loss of confidence in Mr. Parnell which a large body of the Liberal electorate expressed owing to his conduct in a matter not itself connected with politics, constituted a reason which made it necessary to break off parliamentary relations with him.

[1] *Times*, October 3, 1904. Obituary of Sir William Harcourt.

'It does not seem to me [Lord Granville wrote to Mr. Gladstone] to be our business to interfere as to the leadership; with one exception—provided that we are not called upon to be parties to arrangements which would be damaging to ourselves.'[1]

A consultation on this crucial question took place on November 24, 1890, between Mr. Gladstone, Lord Granville, and the principal whip of the Liberal party, at which the fateful decision was taken that the reply to the question must be in the affirmative.

Mr. Justin McCarthy became leader of the new Irish party; but a small minority, comprising many of the ablest of the party, adhered firmly to Mr. Parnell; and when in the following year their chief suddenly died, Mr. John Redmond became their leader. The Irish Home Rulers were now as hopelessly divided, both in and out of Parliament, as the Liberal party itself.

LORD GRANVILLE TO MR. GLADSTONE.

HOUSE OF LORDS, *January* 22, 1891.

'MY DEAR GLADSTONE,—I saw Harcourt this morning—as meek as a lamb; but very anxious that you should come up. The two Morleys the same. So I took the liberty of telegraphing to you. I have not yet received any answer from you. In the meantime Morley had consented to talk over the matter with Harcourt and me. But he has just seen McCarthy, and I have telegraphed to you, not to settle anything till you hear from Morley. I think you will approve of what he is to say to McCarthy.

'I liked your letter to the latter very much.

'In that to Dillon, it is possible that you mention Parnell too much. It would be better to refer to him as little as possible. But this is impudent hypercriticism.

'I may not get your telegraphic answer till late to-night.

'Yours, G.'

Attacks of his old enemy gout began at this time to return upon Lord Granville with increasing frequency and severity, and notwithstanding all his buoyancy and courage, there were signs that the battle was a losing one. One afternoon

[1] Lord Granville to Mr. Gladstone, November 20, 1890.

in February 1891 a shrunken and evidently suffering figure was seen sunk in an arm-chair at Brooks's in the same room where the little speech on the unity of the Club had been made. 'Who is that?' whispered Sir Robert Reid, 'in that chair? Good heavens! is that Lord Granville?' 'Yes, it is,' replied the member to whom the inquiry had been addressed, who had himself been equally shocked at the visible change. It was the last time Lord Granville entered the Club; complications followed the attack of gout, and he rapidly lost strength. On March 31 the end came. Lord Granville died in South Audley Street, at the house of his brother, Mr. Frederick Leveson-Gower, in the seventy-sixth year of his age. He was buried at Stone in Staffordshire, in the midst of that industrial population whose civil and political liberties he had so long and strenuously upheld. Lord Spencer, Lord Rosebery, and Mr. John Morley were present to take the last farewell of their colleague. With them were many others who had served with or under Lord Granville in the various offices of State which he had occupied.

'On April 4 [Sir Robert Meade wrote in his notes], I followed my old friend and master, Lord Granville, to the grave. It is a hackneyed saying that *no one can take his place.* But it is exactly true in his case. Justice has not been done him in many respects. It is the fashion to speak of him as a pleasure-loving man who sacrificed business to pleasure. Never was a greater mistake. He enjoyed amusements, but never neglected business. He was an excellent administrator, because when he had a good man under him, he trusted him while holding all the threads in his hands.[1] His judgment was sounder than that of any other man I ever came across. It must never be forgotten that he was the only English or indeed Continental statesman who really stood up successfully to Prince

[1] '. . . The pleasantest and most satisfactory chief of those under whom I served. His merits as a chief were that he trusted his subordinates in matters of detail, that he saw his way clearly and would act vigorously in what may be called ministerial as distinguished from departmental policy, and he was ready to act with promptitude and authority in matters which none but a chief could handle, matters requiring action in the House of Lords or the Cabinet or the Treasury. And in a diplomatic kind of way he thoroughly enjoyed the characteristic and amusing side of business.' *Letters of Lord Blachford*, 264.

Bismarck at a time when, so far at least as warfare with the pen is concerned, the relations of the two countries were strained, not to say bitter, e.g. the Cameroons question, when Dr. Nachtigal was shown to have visited the West Coast of Africa armed with letters of introduction to British officials and in the guise of a bagman bent on developing German trade, whereas the subsequently avowed object really was to obtain territory which we were on the point of taking ourselves. Also his treatment of Bismarck's manœuvre when he wrote a despatch to Count Münster telling him to communicate it to Lord Granville ; but, thinking better of it, he never sent it, and then spoke and wrote as if he had really sent it. He had the misfortune to be in office just during the critical period when it was Bismarck's cue to quarrel with us over the German colonial aspirations. We were always before assured by Count Münster that Prince Bismarck's complaints on colonial questions were mere electioneering despatches for home consumption ; and no one was more surprised in the end than Count Münster himself.'

The future historian will perhaps ask why Lord Granville, having led the Liberal party in the House of Lords almost uninterruptedly over a period of thirty-five years, and having left the party a mere wreck, nevertheless lost no reputation in consequence; why in fact nobody ever thought of reproaching him or making him responsible for the disaster. He may also ask why Lord Granville, having piloted perhaps as many great measures as any statesman of his time through the Upper House, nevertheless is not personally associated with any one of them in the way in which Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone are associated with the great legislative triumphs of their time. The answer to both these questions is to be found in the same circumstances. The destruction of the Liberal party in the House of Lords was easily seen not to have been caused by Lord Granville, but, on the contrary, to have been long delayed by his skill and patience, and by the possession of the same qualities which had enabled his celebrated ancestor to be the only person who without loss of dignity could sit in the same Cabinet with Charles Townshend.[1] He was by nature a diplomatist, and he carried the qualities of the diplomatist with him into home affairs and the management

[1] See vol. i. ch. i. p. 2.

of the House of Lords. Such qualities, however, are seldom accompanied by the great constructive abilities which make the legislator, and Lord Granville never pretended to aspire to the possession of the grasp which in this respect distinguished Lord Russell and Mr. Gladstone. But like them he was a born fighter, though, partly under the pressure of the circumstances in which he was placed, a fighter of a different kind. One day towards the close of his career, he observed, 'I intend to fight it out to the end.' Whether the observation was at the moment intended to apply to his old enemy the gout, or to the political situation, or to a combination of all these adverse circumstances, was not clear. But characteristic of him throughout his life was the fixed determination 'to bate not a jot of trust or hope.' Under the mantle of an outward courtesy, and at times a little obscured by it, he possessed a dogged tenacity peculiarly his own. Without it he could not have faced the odds against him. If at times he seemed over-anxious to adjourn a question, it was nearly always on the principle of the French proverb, *reculer pour mieux sauter*. This mental habit, if not created, was certainly fostered by the circumstances of the position in the House of Lords, until sometimes it may have seemed that it was pushed to extremes, especially when transferred to other fields of action, where perhaps he was too much inclined to succeed by using others instead of imposing his own will. In his masterly retreats before overwhelming forces, in his frequent return to the attack when he seemed most beaten, in the outpost engagements and unexpected sallies by which he tried to encourage his never numerous and frequently divided and dispirited followers, by the flank marches by which he managed to turn the positions which he was not strong enough to storm, Lord Granville may be compared to the great general of antiquity who, by his delays, was said to have saved the country. But such triumphs are not those which most easily win applause, or most effectively strike the public imagination, or receive the greatest meed of fame from the pen of the historian. The retreat of Moreau through the Black Forest was a greater military feat than the battle of

Hohenlinden; but it may be safely said that for one person who has heard of the retreat, a hundred have heard of the battle.

On the day when Lord Granville died Parliament was not sitting, for it was during the Easter recess, and the House of Lords did not meet again till April 14. Then every eye turned to the vacant place, and one after another those who had known the man who had filled it rose to pay their last tribute.

Some had recognised him as leader through the whole of their own career, though these were now but a shrunken band; others had known him both as a colleague and an antagonist; some again as an antagonist only; but all acknowledged the loss of one who was not only the leader of a party, but essentially the leader of the assembly itself, and had long been generally accepted as the representative of the House as a whole in its corporate character in the public eye.

'No political leader,' said Lord Derby, 'ever lived who was more closely and entirely identified with the assembly in which he sat.' He it was, said Lord Selborne, 'who in the face of adverse majorities had invariably made it an object of the deepest personal concern to keep the House in harmony with the other House of Parliament, and to preserve for it the respect and esteem of the public.[1] If there were any cause which might possibly lead any person to

[1] The following letter was written by Lord Granville to the Duke of Richmond in regard to bankrupt peers voting in Parliament:

'My dear Richmond,—There is a painful subject which has already attracted public attention, and is sure to be discussed in one, if not both, Houses of Parliament. It is desirable for the credit of the House of Lords that the position of bankrupt peers should be considered there, before it is dealt with, possibly in an unfriendly spirit, elsewhere.

'We should show ourselves at least as jealous of the character of those who sit and vote with us, as the House of Commons is with regard to its Members.

'I have heard recently that several Conservative peers were strongly of this opinion.

'If you share it, I should be glad to concert with you the measure required to give effect to the principle. Unanimity and decided action would be for the dignity of the House of Lords, and would prevent unnecessary annoyance to individuals, of whom some, I am sorry to say, are old friends of yours and mine.' (December 11, 1870).

estimate at less than their true value the services rendered by Lord Granville . . . it was a quality most admirable—singular disinterestedness and a singular absence of self-assertion on all occasions. He had many opportunities which he would not take of advancing his own reputation, but he always thought of the duty which he had to do, and he never thought of himself.'[1]

'Lord Granville [said Lord Derby, who, like Lord Selborne, had been both political friend and foe] held strong and definite opinions; he held them more strongly than many of those outside, who judged only by the invariable gentleness of his language, were apt to suppose; but they were the opinions of a statesman and a man of the world, of one whose immense experience had taught him tolerance, whose thorough knowledge of individual character was combined with a knowledge of the wants and ideas of society as a whole, and by his mental constitution was free alike from optimistic enthusiasm in his earlier career, and later from that which is often the reaction from exaggerated enthusiasm, the pessimism and despondency which are too often the characteristic and the misfortune of old age.'[2]

Such were some of the tributes paid by those who had been 'more closely and personally associated' with the Liberal leader, and, as Viscount Cranbrook pointed out, could speak of him in that capacity. Speaking himself, in the absence, owing to illness, of the Marquess of Salisbury, as leader of the House and as their mouthpiece on that occasion, he wished to remind them that Lord Granville

'for forty years of public life lived in the sight of a censorious and critical world with many eyes upon him at home and abroad; and yet during all that time, so far as he knew, had never made a personal enemy; and it was so most undoubtedly in the House of Lords. What was the reason? It was very largely because he was a true friend to the House in which he sat. . . . In the many controversies which have arisen with regard to this assembly, Lord Granville never threw any slur upon its reputation in the House or out of it, and on all occasions watched with jealous watchfulness over its interests, its dignity, and its honour. Can it, then, be wondered that the House reciprocated the feelings which Lord Granville always himself entertained? Thus, while he did honour to this assembly, he was himself honoured by it universally. It was not one party more

[1] *Hansard*, cccli. 468. [2] *Ibid.* cccli. 466, 467.

than another that recognised him. He was recognised by all as a fit spokesman and representative of the House.'

Lord Kimberley was Lord Granville's successor in the leadership of the Liberal peers.

'To those [he said, entering now on his difficult succession] who, like my noble friend Lord Spencer and myself, have long been associated with Lord Granville in public life, the loss we have sustained is almost irreparable. Long and sadly shall we miss his wise and sagacious counsel and guidance, the genial friendship which he extended to us at all times, and his constant support in all circumstances. Lord Granville was not perhaps endowed with the gift of powerful and commanding eloquence, but upon serious occasions the House knows well that his speeches were wanting neither in weight nor in dignity. At the same time, he possessed a singular gift of lightness of touch, felicity of expression and happy anecdote, with which he enlivened even the driest debate in this House. Our lamented friend was never deficient, never failing in his popular sympathies, and, he never shrank from the open expression of his opinions and from their firm and consistent maintenance whether in this House or outside of it. But, as the leader of this House or as the leader of the Opposition, he possessed the remarkable gift of expressing his views without compromise, yet never with any offence to those who were opposed to him. He had many opponents in this House, but even among those opponents he had many friends. Your Lordships all remember how he conducted the business of the House when leader of the Government for many years, with what tact, with what discretion, with what conciliatory temper and patience, under circumstances often of very great difficulty in the face of adverse majorities. But that tact and that temper never failed. He had that singular way of tempering his opposition with moderation and that kindly manner, which disarmed any feeling of hostility to himself personally. The noble Viscount has most truly said that it was one striking characteristic of him that he always had at heart the honour and the dignity of this House, and by that he gained its confidence and its esteem.'[1]

Illness kept the Duke of Argyll away as well as Lord Salisbury; and the House missed the lofty eloquence in which Lord Granville's old ally and more recent antagonist would have commemorated their friendship and mourned his

[1] *Hansard*, ccclii. 464–465.

loss. Writing next day to the *Times*, he expressed himself as follows, and no finer eulogy can close these pages :—

'Nearly connected with Lord Granville by a double family tie during very nearly fifty years, I cannot pretend to speak with perfect impartiality on his personal characteristics. But there is no need for me to do so, since those have been ever thoroughly appreciated by the public. His universal courtesy was but the natural expression of an equally universal kindliness of nature, and of a friendliness of disposition towards all men, which was thoroughly genuine and unassumed. In debate his thrusts were sometimes keen; but in private life I can say with truth that during a long intimacy I have never heard him utter one harsh word against his political opponents. A wide acquaintance with men and with affairs made him thoroughly tolerant of all opinions, while it gave breadth and solidity to his own.

'It is, however, rather of his public character that I wish to speak in this letter, and especially of one characteristic in it—and that was his loyalty to all his colleagues, not only individually but as a body. He was in himself a bond of union in every company of which he was a member. I have had the honour of being his colleague in every Cabinet in which he held office since 1853, except the last. Amidst every variety of composition, and in many narrow passages of public policy, Lord Granville seemed a born amalgam. With a head always cool and a temper always judicial, there was not one of those Cabinets in which his opinion was otherwise regarded than as one of the very weightiest that could be given. And never was it given except in the most conciliatory form, and with the most genial appreciation of personal susceptibilities. Especially do I wish here to bear my testimony to his conduct in the Foreign Office, all the more because it is in respect to that conduct that some adverse criticism has chiefly arisen. His unswerving loyalty to his colleagues imposes on us all who have survived him a corresponding loyalty to him. His foreign policy was the foreign policy of the Cabinet. The administration of the Foreign Office ought never to be, and certainly never was in his hands, as personal, or even as predominantly departmental, as the administration of the other great departments often is, and may safely be. The Home Office, the Colonial Office, and the India Office may all be worked with only occasional references to the Cabinet. But in a department where, sometimes at least, a single imprudent act, and almost a single imprudent word, may light the flames of war, or commit the country to courses of action leading inevitably to the same result, it is the duty of the

Minister to reflect faithfully the deliberate opinions of his chief and of the Government as a whole. We all know that this has not always been kept in view. The powerful personality of one Minister, or the generous impulsiveness of another, has often forced the hands of Governments. But no colleague of Lord Granville's could ever make this complaint. He had an unequalled aptitude for gathering and reflecting that general and combined opinion, which might be largely determined, indeed, by his own advice, but of which all his colleagues were bound—not formally alone, or in a mere official sense, but really and in conscience—to bear the full responsibility.

'It was Lord Granville's lot to be Foreign Minister at some very embarrassing conjunctures—when the failure of older arrangements came up to the surface and had to be dealt with, or when new arrangements and engagements were forced upon us, as in the case of Egypt. These involve undoubtedly extensive liabilities for the future, and different opinions may well be held about them. But Lord Granville never took a single step without full consultation with his colleagues, and every one he did take rested, and must continue to rest, upon the equal responsibility of them all.'[1]

'Nobody ever was so young as I once was,' Lord Granville was reported to have said in a speech very late in his career. It was observed at the time of his death that what at the moment was only a graceful reminiscence was capable of extension to his whole life. The Greek proverb that those whom the gods love die young, has been happily explained in a sense different from that which Byron gave it when he said that 'Heaven gives its favourites early death,' and to mean that the gods permit those favourites the breath of youth long after they have commenced the descent into the valley of the shadow. In this sense, in despite of his seventy-six years, when he passed away it was truly said that Lord Granville died young.[2]

[1] *Times*, April 16, 1891.

[2] Obituary, *Black and White*, April 1891.

# APPENDIX

(*From the* TABLET, *September* 27, 1884.)

## ST. AUGUSTINE'S CROSS IN THE ISLE OF THANET.

Effigiem Christi dum transis pronus honora,
Sed non effigiem sed Quem designat adora.
(*Mediæval Couplet.*)

A STATELY monolith, sculptured over with Christian emblems, will mark the spot on the shore of Ebbs Fleet, where, of old, St. Augustine held his first interview with King Ethelbert. To find this hallowed spot we shall do well to alight at Minster Junction, and, passing thence the venerable church of the Virgin Mother of God, we shall find ourselves midway between the present Benedictine Cloister dedicated to St. Mildred, and old St. Mildred's Abbey, originally built by St. Eadberg, the friend and disciple of St. Boniface. A walk through the adjoining avenue, where the trees meet over the roadway, forming a leafy bower nearly a quarter of a mile long, will take us up the Minster lanes on to the Ramsgate and Sandwich roads. Here we are in close proximity to St. Augustine's own ground, the 'Felix tellus cujus gleba contraxisse benedictionem creditur ab adventu Beati Augustini.' The gently sloping field of 130 acres beside yon railway bridge, is Cotmansfield—that is, 'the field of the man of God.' In former times this field was fringed by a group of majestic oaks, the last of which, known as St. Augustine's Oak, was cut down only half a century ago. 'We have obtained particulars,' says Mr. Robert Bubb, of Minster, 'of the exact site of the Augustine Oak, from one who lived not far from it all his life-time, and had baited his cows under it. It was about four rods south from the Ramsgate road, in a field now the property of Earl Granville, and three rods east from Thornland. It stood on a quarter of an acre of ground at least, and its principal branches were fifty inches in girth. It was felled about fifty years ago, and used for repairs on Mr. Petley's farm close by.' It was this passage in Mr. Bubb's 'Historical Notes on Thanet' that first suggested to Lord Granville the plan of erecting his memorial to St. Augustine.

He accordingly communicated the project to Mr. Bubb, who, in his turn, sought the advice of Dr. Freeman, of Birmingham, a native of the Isle of Thanet, well versed in its antiquities, as was his father before him. Indeed, Dr. Freeman the elder used to look with a feeling akin to veneration on that grand outstretching oak. And in his MS. notes, as yet unpublished, he expresses his belief that St. Augustine and King Ethelbert first met each other there, and distinctly records the tradition which tells how England's Apostle baptized his first convert in the stream close by, known ever since as St. Augustine's Well. An old frowsy shepherd, with matted beard and the most primitive of pastoral crooks, appeared on this scene when last we were there, looking for all the world like a Saxon hind come to life again. And he told us how strangers often found their way to that well from 'Lunnon' and elsewhere, taking water away with them; while years ago he remembers a large gathering of gentlemen there, for what purpose he knew not, nor could he recollect how the place was called till 'St. Augustine's Well' was suggested. 'Ay, ay, that's it,' was the reply; and he told how the water never failed there, for he had drawn it for his own cottage, day by day, for many a year. It seems more than probable, from these local memories clinging round this one secluded spot (and no other in the Isle of Thanet), that the interview of St. Augustine with the King took place at Cotmansfield, and under its majestic oaks. For the King, as we know from Ven. Bede, sat in the open, fearing lest magic spells should be wrought upon him had he received the strangers within doors.

We heartily congratulate Earl Granville, therefore, on the grand and fitting memorial he so liberally designed to mark this historic spot. He himself selected as its model the famous Saxon crosses of Sandbach, near Crewe, and commissioned Mr. Roddis, of Birmingham, to execute the work, the details of which are thus described by Dr. Freeman:

'The west front exhibits the Christian legend. On the encircled cross at the head of the shaft are four emblems of the Evangelists—the lion, the eagle, the man, and the bull. On the panel shaft below are represented the Annunciation, the Virgin and Child, the Crucifixion, and Transfiguration, with demi-figures of saints and angels. On the north side the theme is continued by figures of the Twelve Apostles, each bearing his appropriate emblem, Judas being shown with a beast's head, as was the practice in early symbolism. On the south side are a series of fourteen figures of early Christian martyrs, commencing with St. Stephen, and following on with SS. Bartholomew, Agnes, Sebastian, Margaret, George of Cappadocia,

&c., also with characteristic emblems. The east front of the circular cross is filled in with Runic ornament, which continues nearly half-way down the shaft, when the design breaks into diamond-shaped panels, filled with figures in the following order: "St. Alban, the proto-martyr of England" (A.D. 303), "St. Augustine attended by monks," and "Ethelbert, King of Kent." The shaft, a monolith about twelve feet high, has a bold cabled beading on its four angles, and between that and the panels, on the two wider faces, is an elegant pattern of the string ornamentation so often met with in Runic carving. Including the base and cross, the monument rises to a height of about twenty feet. With the possible exception of some of the figures, it is a strict imitation of the original at Sandbach. It is being executed in stone from the celebrated Doulting quarries, the durability of which is attested by its use in the construction of Glastonbury Abbey.'

This truly national monument is flanked to the north by a sapling oak planted last year by Lady Granville; seaward it faces Ebbs Fleet and the old Rutupian bay; while south-west lie the grim ruins of Richborough and those stark sandy flats of dreary Sandwich. There is a melancholy interest about that forlorn strand where Hengist and Horsa fought and defeated the British Vortigern, driving the Britons and Christianity from the land; where subsequently so many Christian apostles came and went from the land of the Angles—Augustine and Boniface in the van—and where, in their turn, the heathen Danes (they too one day to become saints of God) swept like a scourge over Saxon England. A mysterious interest attaches also to that stone-rooted mark of the cross within the storm-beaten walls of Richborough. And though we may be told that it is merely 'the roof of a Roman granary,' yet we are not aware that the granary itself has ever been traced. And this is the more a puzzle, because there is a cavern, not unlike the entrance of a Roman catacomb, close by this cruciform layer of stone, which *should* lead to the granary, if granary there be. Speaking strictly *en amateur*, the present writer believes it to have been a chapel raised in very early times on the old Roman highway to St. Augustine, and fallen into decay when Richborough was abandoned to its kingly solitude. A word here might be said of the chapel at Richborough, built, as Mr. Planché and others say, over St. Augustine's Rock, which is said to have borne his footprint. Another rock there was at Ebbs Fleet called *Lapis Sanctae Mildredae*, after the famous Minster Saint, who also landed there; and these two rocks have been confused by later historians.

It is a pleasing sign of the times, and one of happy augury, to

have the Cross of Christ again raised aloft on Christian soil in token of His victory over man's sin and pagan wretchedness. In bygone days there were two such sacred emblems in this immediate neighbourhood—the one on top of Mount Pleasant, and the other lower down beside St. Mildred's Abbey. But these were uprooted in the winter of Puritan ascendency, and it is a sign of 'our second spring' to find them thus fittingly replaced by one who holds dear to heart his national and religious history. We cannot better close this brief record than with the simple and elegant lines which the Dean of Christ Church, Dr. Liddell, has penned for this monument:

AUGUSTINUS
AD RUTUPINA LITTORA IN INSULA THANETI
POST TOT TERRÆ MARISQUE LABORES
TANDEM ADVECTUS
HOC IN LOCO CUM ETHELBERTO REGE CONGRESSUS
PRIMAM APUD NOSTRATES CONCIONEM HABUIT
ET FIDEM CHRISTIANAM
QUÆ PER TOTAM ANGLIAM MIRA CELERITATE DIFFUSA EST
FELICITER INAUGURAVIT
A.D. DXCV.
QUARUM RERUM
UT APUD ANGLOS SERVETUR MEMORIA
HOC MONUMENTUM PONENDUM CURAVIT
G. G. L.-G. COMES GRANVILLE PORTUUM CUSTOS
A.D. MDCCCLXXXIV.

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